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DAVID COPPERFIELD



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THE FRIENDLY WAITER AND I.

[Frontispiece (reference to p. 20)]

The
Personal History and Experience
of
DAVID COPPERFIELD
The Younger

By
Charles Dickens

Abridged and Edited for Schools by
H. A. Treble, M.A.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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INTRODUCTION

NEARLY half the nineteenth century had elapsed before the lower-middle class in England emerged from its obscurity. The Reform Bill of 1832 took the sole voice in the government of the country away from the great landowners ; manufacturers and merchants who had acquired wealth through the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution were more adequately represented in Parliament, and the balance of power was transferred to the middle classes such as farmers and shopkeepers. True, working-men were not enfranchised, but the great Bill did much to prepare the way for democracy, though it did not actually bring democracy in. The new Poor Law of 1834 alleviated the degradation of the poverty-stricken, and brought about the unions of several parishes, governed by popularly elected guardians of the poor, whereby the administration of the law was vastly improved. By a further beneficent change the self-appointed and consequently corrupt local borough corporations were superseded by popularly elected town-councils.

The importance of the lower-middle class people was further enhanced by the increased national prosperity which followed on the gradual introduction of free trade : population increased enormously, and with it the national revenue kept pace. The Industrial Revolution brought in its train all sorts of inventions ; the application of steam to vehicles of transport, in particular, rendered the increased volume of trade possible.

But this increase of prosperity was not an unmixed blessing : the agricultural labourer was little better than a slave, the evils of child-labour in factories were appalling, wages were low and prices were high.

Such was the state of England when Charles Dickens, the son of lower-middle class parents, leaped into fame at one bound with the publication of *Pickwick* in 1836. His early life had been a hard one. Shortly after the removal of the family from Chatham to London in 1821, when Dickens was nine years of age, his father was committed to the Marshalsea for debt, and young Charles carried out the sorrowful duties of pawning the household effects, as David Copperfield did for the Micawber family. When twelve years old, Charles was sent to work in a blacking factory, his bitter experiences in which form the background of the Murdstone and Grinby episode in the life of young Copperfield. It was not so much hard work or harsh treatment that hurt him; but the utter wretchedness of his life, his sense of degradation.

However the bitterness passed: the family grew more prosperous, and after two or three years at school Charles was placed in a solicitor's office. Finding the life too monotonous, he learnt shorthand and became a reporter. This work brought out the best qualities in the youthful journalist, and gave him opportunities of observing life in the city, the fruits of which we have in his stories of London life; for what Dickens once saw he never forgot.

He had published, under the pen-name Boz, a few sketches and short stories, when he was asked by Chapman & Hall, the publishers, to write descriptive letter-press to accompany some sporting illustrations of Seymour. On the death of that artist, H. K. Browne ('Phiz') took his place, and the combination of 'Boz' and 'Phiz' was as great a success in *Pickwick* as was that of Gilbert and Sullivan fifty years later in comic opera. The name of Dickens became a household word: everybody looked forward with feverish anxiety to the publication of the instalments of his tale, issued in their green covers. Novel succeeded novel, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge*, in rapid succession.

Between May 1849 and November 1850, *David Copperfield* was issued in twenty monthly parts. This novel was regarded by Dickens himself as his masterpiece. In a preface written years afterwards, he allows us to share his feelings when he had

finished his tale. "It would," he says, "concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two-years' imaginative task; or how an Author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet, I had nothing else to tell; unless, indeed, I were to confess that no one can ever believe this Narrative, in the reading, more than I believed it in the writing. . . . Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child, and his name is DAVID COPPERFIELD."

And this, too, is the verdict of most of those who love their Dickens; partly, no doubt, because the construction of the tale is more consistent, and in it Dickens' imagination is more restrained than in the earlier novels, but largely because of the fact that there are introduced into *David Copperfield* so many of the novelist's own experiences, so many of the troubles and difficulties which beset him in his earlier life, both in the days of his unhappy childhood and in his hard struggle with Fate, before Fortune came to him with one tremendous bound.

Of his later novels, two stand apart, one, *A Tale of Two Cities*, as historical, dealing with the fall of the Bastile, and *Great Expectations*, a novel which Dickens intended to end in the minor key until he was persuaded by Lord Lytton to give it a happy ending. At his death, in 1870, Dickens left *Edwin Drood* unfinished.

Charles Dickens was almost entirely self-educated, for his school-days were few, and he does not seem to have received much direct advantage from them. "Pray, sir," his father was once asked, "where was your son educated?" To which John Dickens replied, in almost the very words Mr. Micawber might have used, "Why, indeed, sir—ha! ha! he may be said to have educated himself!" In a garret adjoining his bedroom in Chatham the boy discovered a small collection of books—*Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphrey Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Robinson*

Crusoe, *The Arabian Nights*, and *Tales of the Genii*. These he read and re-read until he almost knew them by heart : they exerted a powerful influence on his receptive mind ; they were a consolation to him during his two years' drudgery with the firm of blacking-makers.

Of book-lore, then, Dickens had but little. The greater part of his early life he spent in London, "himself a part of it, struggling and suffering in its sordid welter, at an age when the strongest impressions are received. It did not last long enough to corrupt the natural sweetness of his mind." His knowledge of the legal world, of which he made use in many of his novels, was acquired during his two years' work as attorney's clerk, followed by that of reporter in the courts of Doctors' Commons. As a newspaper reporter he travelled the length and breadth of the land, and the result is his glorious descriptions of coach-rides, of life on English roads and in English inns, descriptions of the amusements of the people—circuses and shows, cheap-Jacks and menageries, conjurers and acrobats. A panorama of early Victorian England is presented to us in his pages.

The popularity of Dickens, unlike that of his illustrious contemporary Thackeray, was greater in his lifetime than it was later. Indeed, a strong reaction set in against Dickens after his death, though in recent years it has been fully counteracted, and the fame of the novelist is now as great as ever. His novels are read by rich and poor, by boys and girls as well as by their grandfathers and grandmothers. The many faults of Dickens as an artist—imagination at times running riot, exaggeration, caricature, all the tricks of melodrama, mannerisms in literary style—are more than compensated for by his manifold virtues. The secret of his continued popularity is his absolute sincerity of purpose, indomitable vitality, and all-conquering humour. He was the greatest optimist in an age of emancipation ; he took upon himself the burdens of the weak, and these burdens he carried always with a smile. His ideal was a contented family circle, and to secure this contentment he tilted against oppression in whatever form he found it.

Dickens was no great 'plotter,' a fact which may be set

down to the publication of many of his novels in serial form, but his powers of artistic creation were limitless; and in these two respects the Victorian novelist may be compared with the Elizabethan dramatist. Indeed, Dickens has been called "a Cockney Shakespeare."

It was in the odd and the grotesque that Dickens' greatest achievements lay: even his most humorous creations are apart from reality. "He saw every man's nose twice as big as it was, and every man's eyes like saucers. And this was the basis of his gaiety." Possibly the drawings of 'Phiz,' who illustrated many of the novels, are, in part, the cause of this unreality. Similarly, character with Dickens was generally heightened into caricature. The novelist seems to fasten on some feature, some eccentricity, and to play on it until we know precisely what to expect each time the character appears in the book. Thus, Wilkins Micawber is always waiting "for something to turn up," Mrs. Gummidge is a "lone lorn creature," Uriah Heep is ever "'umble."

The gospel of high spirits and of mirth, incessantly preached by Dickens, is irresistible. The spell that he cast upon the middle decades of last century has not passed away, nor will it pass so long as there are in the world men and women in whom the buoyancy and energy of life survive.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

CHAPTER I

I AM BORN

To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously. I was born at Blunderstone, in Suffolk. My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months, when mine opened on it. There is something strange to me, even now, in the reflection that he never saw me; and something stranger yet in the shadowy remembrance that I have of my first childish associations with his white grave-stone in the churchyard, and of the indefinable com- 10 passion I used to feel for it lying out alone there in the dark night, when our little parlour was warm and bright with fire and candle, and the doors of our house were—almost cruelly, it seemed to me sometimes—bolted and locked against it.

An aunt of my father's, and consequently a great-aunt of mine, of whom I shall have more to relate by and by, was the principal magnate of our family. My father had once been a favourite of hers, I believe; but she was mortally affronted by his marriage, on the ground that my mother 20 was "a wax doll." She had never seen my mother, but she knew her to be not yet twenty. My father and Miss Betsey Trotwood never met again.

This was the state of matters on the afternoon of, what *I*

may be excused for calling, that eventful and important Friday.

My mother was sitting by the fire, that bright, windy March afternoon, very timid and sad, when, lifting her eyes as she dried them, to the window opposite, she saw a strange lady coming up the garden. My mother had a sure foreboding, at the second glance, that it was Miss Betsey. The setting sun was glowing on the strange lady, over the garden-fence, and she came walking up to the door with a composure of
10 countenance that could have belonged to nobody else.

"Mrs. David Copperfield, I *think*," said Miss Betsey.

"Yes," said my mother, faintly.

"Miss Trotwood," said the visitor. "You have heard of her, I daresay?"

My mother answered she had had that pleasure.

"Now you see her," said Miss Betsey. My mother bent her head, and begged her to walk in.

"Take off your cap, child," said Miss Betsey, "and let me see you."

20 My mother was too much afraid of her to refuse compliance with this odd request, if she had any disposition to do so. Therefore she did as she was told, and did it with such nervous hands that her hair (which was luxuriant and beautiful) fell all about her face.

"Why, bless my heart!" exclaimed Miss Betsey. "You are a very Baby!"

My mother was, no doubt, unusually youthful in appearance even for her years; she hung her head, as if it were her fault, poor thing, and said, sobbing, that indeed she was
30 afraid she was but a childish widow, and would be but a childish mother if she lived. In a short pause which ensued, she had a fancy that she felt Miss Betsey touch her hair, and that with no ungentle hand; but, looking at her, in her timid hope, she found that lady sitting with the skirt of her dress tucked up, her hands folded on one knee, and her feet upon the fender, frowning at the fire.

After the birth of the child, Dr. Chhillip, "the meekest of his sex, the mildest of little men," came downstairs into the parlour where Miss Trotwood was seated. She had made up her mind that the baby would be a girl and had intended to be her godmother and to have her called after herself—Betsey Trotwood Copperfield.

"Well, ma'am, I am happy to congratulate you."

"How is she?" said my aunt, folding her arms with her bonnet still tied on one of them.

"Well, ma'am, she will soon be quite comfortable, I hope," returned Mr. Chhillip. "There cannot be any objection to your seeing her presently, ma'am. I may do her good."

"And she? How is she?" said my aunt, sharply.

Mr. Chhillip laid his head a little more on one side, and looked at my aunt like an amiable bird.

"The baby," said my aunt. "How is she?" 10

"Ma'am," returned Mr. Chhillip, "I apprehended you had known. It's a boy."

My aunt said never a word, but took her bonnet by the strings, in the manner of a sling, aimed a blow at Mr. Chhillip's head with it, put it on bent, walked out, and never came back. She vanished like a discontented fairy; and never came back any more.

No. I lay in my basket, and my mother lay in her bed; but Betsey Trotwood Copperfield was for ever in the land of dreams and shadows. 20

CHAPTER II

I OBSERVE

THE first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty, my nurse, with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they

seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples.

What else do I remember ? Let me see.

There comes out of the cloud, our house. Here is a long passage leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night. Then there are the two parlours : the parlour in which we sit of an evening, my mother and 10 I, and Peggotty—for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone—and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday ; grandly, but not so comfortably.

Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew ! With a window near it, out of which our house can be seen, and is seen many times during the morning's service, by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it's not being robbed, or it is not in flames. But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, 20 and frowns to me, as I stand upon the seat, that I am to look at the clergyman.

That is among my very earliest impressions. That, and a sense that we were both a little afraid of Peggotty, and submitted ourselves in most things to her direction, were among the first opinions—if they may be so called—that I ever derived from what I saw.

Peggotty and I were sitting one night by the parlour fire, alone. I was tired of reading, and dead sleepy ; but having leave, as a high treat, to sit up until my mother came home 30 from spending the evening at a neighbour's, I would rather have died upon my post (of course) than have gone to bed. I felt so sleepy, that I knew if I lost sight of anything, for a moment, I was gone.

"Peggotty," says I, suddenly, "were you ever married ? "

"Lord, Master Davy," replied Peggotty. "What's out marriage in your head ? "

"I don't know!—You mustn't marry more than one person at a time, may you, Peggotty?"

"Certainly not," says Peggotty, with the promptest decision.

"But if you marry a person, and the person dies, why then you may marry another person, may n't you, Peggotty?"

"You MAY," says Peggotty, "if you choose, my dear. That's a matter of opinion."

"But what is your opinion, Peggotty?" said I.

"My opinion is," said Peggotty, taking her eyes from me, after a little indecision, and going on with her work, "that I never was married myself, Master Davy, and that I don't expect to be. That's all I know about the subject."

"You an't cross, I suppose, Peggotty, are you?" said I, after sitting quiet for a minute.

I really thought she was, she had been so short with me; but I was quite mistaken: for she laid aside her work, and opening her arms wide, took my curly head within them, and gave it a good squeeze.

The garden bell rang. We went out to the door; and there was my mother, looking unusually pretty, I thought, and with her a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers, who had walked home with us from church last Sunday.

As my mother stooped down on the threshold to take me in her arms and kiss me, the gentleman said I was a more highly privileged little fellow than a monarch—or something like that; for my later understanding comes, I am sensible, to my aid here.

"What does that mean?" I asked him, over her shoulder.

He patted me on the head; but somehow, I didn't like him or his deep voice, and I was jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me—which it did. I put it away, as well as I could.

"Oh, Davy!" remonstrated my mother.

"Dear boy!" said Mr. Murdstone, for that was the name of the gentleman. "I cannot wonder at his devotion!"

I never saw such a beautiful colour on my mother's face before. She gently chid me for being rude ; and, keeping me close to her shawl, turned to thank the gentleman for taking so much trouble as to bring her home. She put out her hand to him as she spoke, and, as he met it with his own, she glanced, I thought, at me.

"Let us say 'good-night,' my fine boy," said the gentleman, when he had bent his head—I saw him!—over my mother's little glove.

10 "Good-night!" said I.

"Come! Let us be the best friends in the world!" said the gentleman, laughing. "Shake hands!"

My right hand was in my mother's left, so I gave him the other.

"Why, that's the wrong hand, Davy!" laughed the gentleman.

My mother drew my right hand forward, but I was resolved, for my former reason, not to give it him, and I did not. I gave him the other, and he shook it heartily, and said I was a brave fellow, and went away.

20 At this minute I see him turn round in the garden, and give us a last look with his ill-omened black eyes, before the door was shut.

We were sitting as before, one evening about two months afterwards (when my mother was out as before), when Peggotty, after looking at me several times, and opening her mouth as if she were going to speak, without doing it, said coaxingly—

"Master Davy, how should you like to go along with me and spend a fortnight at my brother's at Yarmouth?

30 Wouldn't that be a treat?"

"Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?" I inquired, provisionally.

"Oh, what an agreeable man he is!" cried Peggotty, holding up her hands. "Then there's the sea; and the boats and ships; and the fishermen; and the beach, and Am to play with——"

Peggotty meant her nephew Ham, but she spoke of him as a morsel of English Grammar.

I was flushed by her summary of delights, and replied that it would indeed be a treat, but what would my mother say ?

"Why then I'll as good as bet a guinea," said Peggotty, intent upon my face, "that she'll let us go. I'll ask her, if you like, as soon as ever she comes home. There now ! "

"But what's she to do while we're away ?" said I, putting my small elbows on the table to argue the point. "She can't live by herself."

If Peggotty were looking for a hole, all of a sudden, in the heel of that stocking, it must have been a very little one indeed, and not worth darning.

"I say ! Peggotty ! She can't live by herself, you know."

"Oh, bless you !" said Peggotty, looking at me again at last. "Don't you know ? She's going to stay for a fortnight with Mrs. Grayper. Mrs. Grayper's going to have a lot of company."

Oh ! If that was it, I was quite ready to go. I waited, 20 in the utmost impatience, until my mother came home from Mrs. Grayper's (for it was that identical neighbour), to ascertain if we could get leave to carry out this great idea. Without being nearly so much surprised as I had expected, my mother entered into it readily ; and it was all arranged that night, and my board and lodging during the visit were to be paid for.

The day soon came for our going. It was such an early day that it came soon, even to me, who was in a fever of expectation, and half-afraid that an earthquake or a fiery 30 mountain, or some other great convulsion of nature, might interpose to stop the expedition. We were to go in a carrier's cart, which departed in the morning after breakfast. I would have given any money to have been allowed to wrap myself up over-night, and sleep in my hat and boots.

It touches me nearly now, although I tell it lightly, to

recollect how eager I was to leave my happy home ; to think how little I suspected what I did leave for ever.

I am glad to recollect that when the carrier's cart was at the gate, and my mother stood there kissing me, a grateful fondness for her and for the old place I had never turned my back upon before, made me cry. I am glad to know that my mother cried too, and that I felt her heart beat against mine.

I am glad to recollect that when the carrier began to move,
10 my mother ran out at the gate, and called to him to stop, that she might kiss me once more. I am glad to dwell upon the earnestness and love with which she lifted up her face to mine and did so.

CHAPTER III

I HAVE A CHANGE

THE carrier's horse was the laziest horse in the world, I should hope, and shuffled along, with his head down, as if he liked to keep the people waiting to whom the packages were directed. I fancied, indeed, that he sometimes chuckled audibly over this reflection, but the carrier said he was only troubled with a cough.

20 We made so many deviations up and down lanes that I was quite tired, and very glad, when we saw Yarmouth. It looked rather spongy and soppy, I thought, as I carried my eye over the great dull waste that lay across the river ; and I could not help wondering, if the world were really as round as my geography-book said, how any part of it came to be so flat.

“ Here's my Am ! ” screamed Peggotty, “ growed out of knowledge ! ”

He was a huge, strong fellow of six feet high, broad in proportion, and round-shouldered ; but with a simpering boy's face, and curly, light hair that gave him quite a sheepish

look. He was dressed in a canvas jacket, and a pair of such very stiff trousers that they would have stood quite as well alone, without any legs in them. And you couldn't so properly have said he wore a hat, as that he was covered in a-top, like an old building, with something pitchy.

Ham carrying me on his back and a small box of ours under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes besetr wn with bits of chips and little hillocks of sand, and went past gas-works, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, ship-wright' yards, ship-breakers' 10 yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lots, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance ; when Ham said—

" Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy ! "

I looked in all directions as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind of superannuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily ; but nothing else 20 in the way of a habitation that was visible to *me*.

" That's not it ? " said I. " That ship-looking thing ? "

" That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

If it had been Aladdin's palace, roc's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it ; but the wonderful charm of it was, that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never been intended to be lived in, on dry 30 land. That was the captivation of it to me. If it had ever been meant to be lived in, I might have thought it small, or inconvenient, or lonely : but never having been designed for any such use, it became a perfect abode.

It was beautifully clean inside, and as tidy as possible. There was a table, and a Dutch clock, and a chest of drawers.

On the walls there were some common coloured pictures, framed and glazed, of Scripture subjects. Over the little mantle-shelf, was a picture of the *Sarah Jane* lugger, built at Sunderland, with a real little wooden stern stuck on to it ; a work of art which I considered to be one of the most enviable possessions that the world could afford. There were some hooks in the beams of the ceiling, the use of which I did not divine then ; and some lockers and boxes and conveniences of that sort, which served for seats and eked out the
10 chairs.

All this I saw in the first glance after I crossed the threshold—childlike, according to my theory—then Peggotty opened a little door and showed me my bedroom. It was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen—in the stern of the vessel ; with a little window, where the rudder used to go through : a little looking-glass, just the right height for me, nailed against the wall, and framed with oyster-shells ; a little bed, which there was just room enough to get into, and a nosegay of seaweed in a blue mug
20 on the table. The walls were whitewashed as white as milk, and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness. One thing I particularly noticed in this delightful house, was the smell of fish ; which was so searching, that when I took out my pocket-handkerchief to wipe my nose, I found it smelt exactly as if it had wrapped up a lobster.

We were welcomed by a very civil woman in a white apron, whom I had seen curtseying at the door when I was on Ham's back, about a quarter of a mile off. Likewise
30 by a most beautiful little girl (or I thought her so) with a necklace of blue beads on, who wouldn't let me kiss her when I offered to, but ran away and hid herself. By and by, when we had dined in a sumptuous manner off boiled dabs, melted butter, and potatoes, with a chop for me, a hairy man with a very good-natured face came home. As he called Peggotty "Lass," and gave her a hearty smack

on the cheek, I had no doubt, from the general propriety of her conduct, that he was her brother; and so he turned out—being presently introduced to me as Mr. Peggotty, the master of the house.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Mr. Peggotty. "You'll find us rough, sir, but you'll find us ready."

I thanked him, and replied that I was sure I should be happy in such a delightful place.

After tea, when the door was shut and all was made snug (the nights being cold and misty now), it seemed to me the most delicious retreat that the imagination of man could conceive. Little Em'ly had overcome her shyness, and was sitting by my side upon the lowest and least of the lockers, which was just large enough for us two, and just fitted into the chimney corner. Mrs. Peggotty, with the white apron, was knitting on the opposite side of the fire. Mr. Peggotty was smoking his pipe. I felt it was a time for conversation and confidence.

"Mr. Peggotty!" says I.

"Sir," says he.

"Did you give your son the name of Ham, because you lived in a sort of ark?"

Mr. Peggotty seemed to think it a deep idea, but answered—

"No, sir. I never giv him no name."

"Who gave him that name, then?" said I, putting question number two of the catechism to Mr. Peggotty.

"Why, sir, his father giv it him," said Mr. Peggotty.

"I thought you were his father!"

"My brother Joe was his father," said Mr. Peggotty.

"Dead, Mr. Peggotty?" I hinted, after a respectful pause.

"Drowndead," said Mr. Peggotty.

I was very much surprised that Mr. Peggotty was not Ham's father, and began to wonder whether I was mistaken about his relationship to anybody else there. I was so curious to know, that I made up my mind to have it out with Mr. Peggotty.

"Little Em'ly," I said, glancing at her. "She is your daughter, isn't she, Mr. Peggotty?"

"No, sir. My brother-in-law, Tom, was *her* father."

I couldn't help it. "—Dead, Mr. Peggotty?" I hinted, after another respectful silence.

"Drowndead," said Mr. Peggotty.

I felt the difficulty of resuming the subject, but had not got to the bottom of it yet, and must get to the bottom somehow. So I said—

10 "Haven't you *any* children, Mr. Peggotty?"

"No, master," he answered with a short laugh. "I'm a bachelore."

"A bachelor!" I said, astonished. "Why, who's that, Mr. Peggotty?" Pointing to the person in the apron who was knitting.

"That's Missis Gummidge," said Mr. Peggotty.

"Gummidge, Mr. Peggotty?"

But at this point Peggotty made such impressive motions to me not to ask any more questions, that I could only sit 20 and look at all the silent company, until it was time to go to bed. Then, in the privacy of my own little cabin, she informed me that Ham and Em'ly were an orphan nephew and niece, whom my host had at different times adopted in their childhood, when they were left destitute; and that Mrs. Gummidge was the widow of his partner in a boat, who had died very poor. He was but a poor man himself, said Peggotty, but as good as gold and as true as steel. The only subject, she informed me, on which he ever showed a violent temper or swore an oath, was this generosity of 30 his; and if it were ever referred to, by any one of them, he struck the table a heavy blow with his right hand (had split it on one such occasion), and swore a dreadful oath that he would be "Gormed" if he didn't cut and run for good, if it was ever mentioned again.

I was very sensible of my entertainer's goodness, and listened to the women's going to bed in another little crib

like mine at the opposite end of the boat, and to him and Ham hanging up two hammocks for themselves on the hooks I had noticed in the roof, in a very luxurious state of mind, enhanced by my being sleepy. As slumber gradually stole upon me, I heard the wind howling out at sea and coming on across the flat so fiercely, that I had a lazy apprehension of the great deep rising in the night. But I bethought myself that I was in a boat, after all; and that a man like Mr. Peggotty was not a bad person to have on board if anything did happen.

10

Nothing happened, however, worse than morning. Almost as soon as it shone upon the oyster-shell frame of my mirror I was out of bed, and out with little Em'ly, picking up stones upon the beach.

" You're quite a sailor, I suppose ? " I said to Em'ly. I don't know that I supposed anything of the kind, but I felt it an act of gallantry to say something; and a shining sail close to us made such a pretty little image of itself, at the moment, in her bright eye, that it came into my head to say this.

20

" No," replied Em'ly, shaking her head, " I'm afraid of the sea."

" Afraid ! " I said, with a becoming air of boldness, and looking very big at the mighty ocean. " I a'nt ! "

" Ah ! but it's cruel," said Em'ly. " I have seen it very cruel to some of our men. I have seen it tear a boat as big as our house, all to pieces."

Of course I was in love with little Em'ly. We used to walk about that dim old flat at Yarmouth in a loving manner, hours and hours. The days sported by us, as if Time had not grown up himself yet, but were a child too, and always at play.

So the fortnight slipped away, varied by nothing but the variation of the tide, which altered Mr. Peggotty's times of going out and coming in, and altered Ham's engagements also. When the latter was unemployed, he sometimes walked

ith us to show us the boats and ships, and once or twice he took us for a row.

At last the day came for going home. I bore up against the separation from Mr. Peggotty and Mrs. Gummidge, but my agony of mind at leaving little Em'ly was piercing. We went arm-in-arm to where the carrier put up, and I promised, on the road, to write to her. I redeemed that promise, afterwards, in characters larger than those in which apartments are usually announced in manuscript, as 10 being to let. We were greatly overcome at parting; and if ever, in my life, I have had a void made in my heart, I had one made that day.

Now, all the time I had been on my visit, I had been ungrateful to my home again, and had thought little or nothing about it. But I was no sooner turned towards it, than my reproachful young conscience seemed to point that way with a steady finger; and I felt, all the more for the sinking of my spirits, that it was my nest, and that my mother was my comforter and friend.

20 This gained upon me as we went along; so that the nearer we drew, and the more familiar the objects became that we passed, the more excited I was to get there, and to run into her arms. But Peggotty, instead of sharing in these transports, tried to check them (though very kindly), and looked confused and out of sorts.

Blunderstone Rookery would come, however, in spite of her, when the carrier's horse pleased—and did. How well I recollect it, on a cold gray afternoon, with a dull sky, threatening rain!

30 The door opened, and I locked, half-laughing and half-crying in my pleasant agitation, for my mother. It was not she, but a strange servant.

"Why, Peggotty!" I said, ruefully, "isn't she come home?"

"Yes, yes, Master Davy," said Peggotty. "She's come home. Wait a bit, Master Davy, and I'll—I'll tell you something."

She took me by the hand ; led me, wondering, into the kitchen ; and shut the door.

"Peggotty !" said I, quite frightened. "What is the matter ? "

"Nothing's the matter, bless yu, Master Davy dear !" she answered. "You see, dear, I should have told you before now, but I hadn't an opportunity. I ought to have made it, perhaps, but I couldn't ~~awfully~~"—that was always the substitute for exactly, in Peggotty's militia of words—"bring my mind to it."

10

"Go on, Peggotty," said I, more frightened than before.

"Master Davy," said Peggotty, untying her bonnet with a shaking hand, and speaking in a breathless sort of way. "What do you think ? You have got a Pa ! "

I trembled, and turned white. Something—I don't know what, or how—connected with the grave in the churchyard, and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind.

"A new one," said Peggotty.

"A new one ? " I repeated.

20

Peggotty gave a gasp, as if she was swallowing something that was very hard, and, putting out her hand, said—

"Come and see him."

"I don't want to see him."

—"And your mama," said Peggotty.

I ceased to draw back, and we went straight to the best parlour, where she left me. On one side of the fire sat my mother ; on the other, Mr. Murdstone. My mother dropped her work, and arose hurriedly, but timidly I thought.

"Now, Clara, my dear," said Mr. Murdstone. "Recollect ! 30 control yourself, always control yourself ! Davy boy, how do you do ? "

I gave him my hand. After a moment of suspense, I went and kissed my mother : she kissed me, patted me gently on the shoulder, and sat down again to her work. I could not look at her, I could not look at him, I knew quite

well that he was looking at us both: and I turned to the window and looked out there, at some shrubs that were drooping their heads in the cold.

As soon as I could creep away, I crept upstairs. My old dear bedroom was changed, and I was to lie a long way off. I rambled downstairs to find anything that was like itself, so altered it all seemed; and roamed into the yard. I very soon started back from there, for the empty dog-kennel was filled up with a great dog—deep-mouthed and 10 black-haired like Him—and he was very angry at the sight of me, and sprang out to get at me.

CHAPTER IV

AM SENT AWAY FROM HOME

The permanent settling at Blunderstone Rookery of Mr. Murdstone's sister Jane, who superseded poor weak-willed Mrs. Murdstone in all domestic affairs, made David and his mother most unhappy. As Mr. Murdstone was caning his stepson for not being able to learn his lessons, David bit his arm through, and in consequence, after five days' imprisonment in his bedroom, was packed off by carrier's cart to a boarding-school.

We might have gone about half a mile, and my pocket-handkerchief was quite wet through, when the carrier stopped short.

Looking out to ascertain what for, I saw, to my amazement, Peggotty burst from a hedge and climb into the cart. She took me in both her arms, and squeezed me until the pressure on my nose was extremely painful, though I never thought of that till afterwards when I found it very tender.

20 Not a single word did Peggotty speak. Releasing one of her arms, she put it down in her pocket to the elbow, and brought out some paper bags of cakes, which she crammed

into my pockets, and a purse which she put into my hand, but not one word did she say. After another and a final squeeze with both arms, she got down from the cart and ran away.

The carrier looked at me, as if to inquire if she were coming back. I shook my head, and said I thought not. "Then come up," said the carrier to the lazy horse; who came up accordingly.

Having by this time cried as much as I possibly could, I began to think it was of no use crying any more. 10

I had now leisure to examine the purse. It was a stiff leather purse, with a snap, and had three bright shillings in it, which Peggotty had evidently polished up with whitening, for my greater delight. But its most precious contents were two half-crowns folded together in a bit of paper, on which was written in my mother's hand, "For Davy. With my love."

After we had jogged on for some little time, I asked the carrier if he was going all the way.

"All the way where?" inquired the carrier. 20

"There," I said.

"Where's there?" inquired the carrier.

"Near London," I said.

"Why, that horse," said the carrier, jerking the rein to point him out, "would be deader than pork afore he got over half the ground."

"Are you only going to Yarmouth, then?" I asked.

"That's about it," said the carrier. "And there I shall take you to the stage-cutch, and the stage-cutch that'll take you to—wherever it is." 30

As this was a great deal for the carrier (whose name was Mr. Barkis) to say, I offered him a cake as a mark of attention, which he ate at one gulp, exactly like an elephant, and which made no more impression on his big face than it would have done on an elephant's.

"Did *she* make 'em now?" said Mr. Barkis, always leaning

forward, in his slouching way, on the footboard of the cart, with an arm on each knee.

"Peggotty, do you mean, sir?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Barkis. "Her."

"Yes. She makes all our pastry, and does all our cooking."

"Do she though?" said Mr. Barkis. "She makes all the apple parsties, and does all the cooking, do she?"

I replied that such was the fact.

"Well. I'll tell you what," said Mr. Barkis. "P'raps you 10 might be writin' to her?"

"I shall certainly write to her," I rejoined.

"Ah!" he said, slowly turning his eyes towards me.

"Well! If you was writin' to her, p'raps you'd recollect to say that Barkis is willin': would you?"

"That Barkis is willing," I repeated, innocently. "Is that all the message?"

"Ye—cs," he said, considering. "Ye—cs. Barkis is willin'."

"But you will be at Blundorstone again to-morrow, Mr. 20 Barkis," I said, faltering a little at the idea of my being far away from it then, "and could give your own message so much better."

As he repudiated this suggestion, however, with a jerk of his head, and once more confirmed his previous request by saying, with profound gravity, "Barkis is willin'. That's the message," I readily undertook its transmission. While I was waiting for the coach in the hotel at Yarmouth that very afternoon, I procured a sheet of paper and an inkstand, and wrote a note to Peggotty which ran thus: "My dear 30 Peggotty. I have come here safe. Barkis is willing. My love to mama. Yours affectionately. P.S. He says he particularly wants you to know—*Barkis is willing.*"

When I had taken this commission on myself prospectively, Mr. Barkis relapsed into perfect silence; and I, feeling quite worn out by all that had happened lately, lay down on a sack in the cart and fell asleep. I slept soundly until we

got to Yarmouth ; which was so entirely new and strange to me in the inn-yard to which we drove, that I at once abandoned a latent hope I had half of meeting with some of Mr. Peggotty's family there, perhaps even with little Em'ly herself.

The coach was in the yard, shir ng very much all over, but without any horses to it as yet ; and it looked in that state as if nothing was more unlikely than its ever going to London. I was thinking this, and wondering what would ultimately become of my box, which Mr Barkis had put down 10 on the yard-pavement by the pole he having driven up the yard to turn his cart), and also what would ultimately become of me, when a lady looked out of a bow-window where some fowls and joints of meat were hanging up, and said—

“ Is that the little gentleman from Blunderstone ? ”

“ Yes, ma'am,” I said.

“ What name ? ” inquired the lady.

“ Copperfield, ma'am,” I said.

“ That won't do,” returned the lady. “ Nobody's dinner is paid for here, in that name.”

20

“ Is it Murdstone, ma'am ? ” I said.

“ If you're Master Murdstone,” said the lady, “ why do you go and give another name, first ? ”

I explained to the lady how it was, who then rang a bell, and called out, “ William ! show the coffee-room ! ” upon which a waiter came running out of a kitchen on the opposite side of the yard to show it, and seemed a good deal surprised when he found he was only to show it to me.

It was a large, long room with some large maps in it. I doubt if I could have felt much stranger if the maps had been 30 real foreign countries, and I cast away in the middle of them. I felt it was taking a liberty to sit down, with my cap in my hand, on the corner of the chair nearest the door ; and when the waiter laid a cloth on purpose for me, and put a set of castors on it, I think I must have turned red all over with modesty.

He brought me some chops, and vegetables, and took the covers off in such a bouncing manner that I was afraid I must have given him some offence. But he greatly relieved my mind by putting a chair for me at the table, and saying, very affably, "Now, six-foot ! come on !"

I thanked him, and took my seat at the board : but found it extremely difficult to handle my knife and fork with anything like dexterity, or to avoid splashing myself with the gravy, while he was standing opposite, staring so hard, 10 and making me blush in the most dreadful manner every time I caught his eye. After watching me into the second chop, he said—

"There's half a pint of ale for you. Will you have it now?"

I thanked him, and said "Yes." Upon which he poured it out of a jug into a large tumbler, and held it up against the light, and made it look beautiful.

"My eye !" he said. "It seems a good deal, don't it ?"

"It does seem a good deal," I answered with a smile. For it was quite delightful to me, to find him so pleasant. 20 He was a twinkling-eyed, pimple-faced man, with his hair standing upright all over his head ; and as he stood with one arm akimbo, holding up the glass to the light with the other hand, he looked quite friendly.

"There was a gentleman here, yesterday," he said, "a stout gentleman, by the name of Topsawyer—perhaps you know him ?"

"No," I said, "I don't think——"

"In breeches and gaiters, broad-brimmed hat, gray coat, speckled choker," said the waiter.

30 "No," I said, bashfully, "I haven't the pleasure——"

"He came in here," said the waiter, looking at the light through the tumbler, "ordered a glass of this ale—*would* order it—I told him not—drank it, and fell dead. It was too old for him. It oughtn't to be drawn ; that's the fact."

I was very much shocked to hear of this melancholy accident, and said I thought I had better have some water.

"Why, you see," said the waiter still looking at the light through the tumbler, with one of his eyes shut up, "our people don't like things being ordered and left. It offends 'em. But I'll drink it, if you like. I'm used to it, and use is everything. I don't think t'll hurt me, if I throw my head back, and take it off quick. Shall I ?"

I replied that he would much oblig^e, me by drinking it, if he thought he could do it safely, but by no means otherwise. When he did throw his head back, and take it off quick, I had a horrible fear, I confess, of seeing him meet 10 the fate of the lamented Mr. Topsaw'er, and fall lifeless on the carpet. But it didn't hurt him. On the contrary, I thought he seemed the fresher for it.

"What have we got here ?" he said, putting a fork into my dish. "Not chops ?"

"Chops," I said.

"Lord bless my soul !" he exclaimed, "I didn't know they were chops. Why, a chop's the very thing to take off the bad effects of that beer ! Ain't it lucky ?"

So he took a chop by the bone in one hand, and a potato 20 in the other, and ate away with a very good appetite, to my extreme satisfaction. He afterwards took another chop, and another potato; and after that, another chop and another potato. When we had done, he brought me a pudding, and having set it before me, seemed to ruminant, and to become absent in his mind for some moments.

"How's the pie ?" he said, rousing himself.

"It's a pudding," I made answer.

"Pudding !" he exclaimed. "Why, bless me, so it is ! What !" looking at it nearer. "You don't mean to say 30 it's a batter-pudding !"

"Yes, it is indeed."

"Why, a batter-pudding," he said, taking up a table-spoon, "is my favourite pudding ! Ain't that lucky ? Come on, little 'un, and let's see who'll get most."

The waiter certainly got most. He entreated me more

than once to come in and win, but what with his table-spoon to my tea-spoon, his despatch to my despatch, and his appetite to my appetite, I was left far behind at the first mouthful, and had no chance with him. I never saw anyone enjoy a pudding so much, I think ; and he laughed, when it was all gone, as if his enjoyment of it lasted still.

Finding him so very friendly and companionable, it was then that I asked for the pen and ink and paper, to write to Peggotty. He not only brought it immediately, but was 10 good enough to look over me while I wrote the letter. When I had finished it, he asked me where I was going to school.

I said, "Near London," which was all I knew.

"Oh, my eye !" he said, looking very low-spirited, "I am sorry for that."

"Why ?" I asked him.

"Oh, Lord !" he said, shaking his head, "that's the school where they broke the boy's ribs—two ribs—a little boy he was. I should say he was—let me see—how old are you, about ?"

20 I told him between eight and nine.

"That's just his age," he said. "He was eight years and six months old when they broke his first rib; eight years and eight months old when they broke his second, and did for him."

I could not disguise from myself, or from the waiter, that this was an uncomfortable coincidence, and inquired how it was done. His answer was not cheering to my spirits, for it consisted of two dismal words, "With whopping."

The blowing of the coach-horn in the yard was a season-30 able diversion, which made me get up and hesitatingly inquire, in the mingled pride and diffidence of having a purse (which I took out of my pocket), if there were anything to pay.

"There's a sheet of letter-paper," he returned. "Did you ever buy a sheet of letter-paper ?"

I could not remember that I ever had.

"It's dear," he said, "on account of the duty. Threepence. That's the way we're taxed in this country. There's nothing else, except the waiter. Never mind the ink. *I* lose by that."

"What should you—what should —how much ought I to—what would it be right to pay the waiter, if you please?" I stammered, blushing.

"If I hadn't a family, and that family hadn't the cow-pock," said the waiter, "I wouldn't take a sixpence. If I didn't support a aged pairint, and a lovely sister,"—here the waiter was greatly agitated—"I wouldn't take a farthing. If I had a good place, and was treated well here, I should beg acceptance of a trifle, instead of taking it. But I live on broken wittles—and I sleep on the coals"—here the waiter burst into tears.

I was very much concerned for his misfortunes, and felt that any recognition short of ninepence would be mere brutality and hardness of heart. Therefore I gave him one of my three bright shillings, which he received with much humility and veneration, and spun up with his thumb, directly afterwards, 20 to try the goodness of.

It was a little disconcerting to me, to find, when I was being helped up behind the coach, that I was supposed to have eaten all the dinner without any assistance. I discovered this, from overhearing the lady in the bow-window, say to the guard, "Take care of that child, George, or he'll burst!" and from observing that the women-servants who were about the place came out to look and giggle at me as a young phenomenon. My unfortunate friend the waiter, who had quite recovered his spirits, did not appear to be 30 disturbed by this, but joined in the general admiration without being at all confused.

We had started from Yarmouth at three o'clock in the afternoon, and we were due in London about eight next morning. We approached it by degrees, and got, in due time, to the inn in the Whitechapel district, for which we were bound.

The guard's eye lighted on me as he was getting down, and he said at the booking-office door—

“ Is there anybody here for a yoongster booked in the name of Murdstone, from Bloonderstone, Sooffolk, to be left till called for ? ”

Nobody answered.

“ Try Copperfield, if you please, sir,” said I, looking helplessly down.

“ Is there anybody here for a yoongster, booked in the 10 name of Murdstone, from Bloonderstone, Sooffolk, but owing to the name of Copperfield, to be left till called for ? ” said the guard. “ Come ! Is there anybody ? ”

No. There was nobody. I looked anxiously around ; but the inquiry made no impression on any of the bystanders, if I except a man in gaiters, with one eye, who suggested that they had better put a brass collar round my neck, and tie me up in the stable.

The coach was clear of passengers by that time, the luggage was very soon cleared out, the horses had been taken out before 20 the luggage, and now the coach itself was wheeled and backed off by some ostlers, out of the way. Still, nobody appeared to claim the dusty youngster from Blundorstone, Suffolk.

More solitary than Robinson Crusoe, who had nobody to look at him and see that he was solitary, I went into the booking-office, and, by invitation of the clerk on duty, passed behind the counter, and sat down on the scale at which they weighed the luggage. Here, as I sat looking at the parcels, packages, and books, and inhaling the smell of stables (ever since associated with that morning), a procession of most 30 tremendous considerations began to march through my mind. I was in the height of fever when a man entered and whispered to the clerk, who presently slanted me off the scale, and pushed me over to him, as if I were weighed, bought, delivered, and paid for.

“ You're the new boy ? ” he said.

“ Yes, sir,” I said.

I supposed I was. I didn't know.

"I'm one of the masters at Salem House," he said.

I made him a bow and felt very much overawed. I was so ashamed to allude to a common place thing like my box, to a scholar and master at Salem House, that we had gone some little distance from the yard before I had the hardihood to mention it. We turned back, or my humbly insinuating that it might be useful to me herewith; and he told the clerk that the carrier had instructions to call for it at noon.

"If you please, sir," I said, when we had accomplished 10 about the same distance as before, "is it far?"

"It's down by Blackheath," he said.

"Is *that* far, sir?" I diffidently asked.

"It's a good step," he said. "We shall go by the stage-coach. It's about six miles."

We found the coach very near at hand, and got upon the roof; but I was so dead sleepy, that when we stopped on the road to take up somebody else, they put me inside where there were no passengers, and where I slept profoundly, until I found the coach going at a footpace up a steep hill 20 among green leaves. Presently, it stopped, and had come to its destination.

A short walk brought us—I mean the Master and me—to Salem House, which was enclosed with a high brick wall, and looked very dull. Over a door in this wall was a board with SALEM HOUSE upon it; and through a grating in this door we were surveyed when we rang the bell, by a surly face, which I found, on the door being opened, belonged to a stout man with a bull-neck, a wooden leg, overhanging temples, and his hair cut close all round his head. 30

"The new boy," said the Master.

The man with the wooden leg eyed me all over—it didn't take long, for there was not much of me—and locked the gate behind us, and took out the key.

Salem House was a square brick building with wings, of a bare and unfurnished appearance. All about it was so

very quiet, that I said to Mr. Mell I supposed the boys were out ; but he seemed surprised at my not knowing that it was holiday-time. That all the boys were at their several homes. That Mr. Creakle, the proprietor, was down by the sea-side with Mrs. and Miss Creakle ; and that I was sent in holiday-time as a punishment for my misdoing, all of which he explained to me as we went along.

I gazed upon the schoolroom into which he took me, as the most forlorn and desolate place I had ever seen. I see 10 it now. A long room with three long rows of desks, and six of forms, and bristling all round with pegs for hats and slates. Scraps of old copy-books and exercises, litter the dirty floor. Some silkworms' houses made of the same materials, are scattered over the desks. Two miserable little white mice, left behind by their owner, are running up and down in a fusty castle made of pasteboard and wire, looking in all the corners with their red eyes for anything to eat. A bird, in a cage very little bigger than himself, makes a mournful rattle now and then in hopping on his perch, two inches 20 high, or dropping from it ; but neither sings nor chirps. There is a strange unwholesome smell upon the room, like mildewed corduroys, sweet apples wanting air, and rotten books. There could not well be more ink splashed about it, if it had been roofless from its first construction, and the skies had rained, snowed, hailed, and blown ink through the varying seasons of the year.

Mr. Mell having left me I went softly to the upper end of the room, observing all this as I crept along. Suddenly I came upon a pasteboard placard, beautifully written, which 30 was lying on the desk, and bore these words : “ *Take care of him. He bites.* ”

I got upon the desk immediately, apprehensive of at least a great dog underneath. But, though I looked all round with anxious eyes, I could see nothing of him. I was still engaged in peering about, when Mr. Mell came back, and asked me what I did up there.

"I beg your pardon, sir," says I, "if you please, I'm looking for the dog."

"Dog?" says he. "What dog?"

"Isn't it a dog, sir?"

"Isn't what a dog?"

"That's to be taken care of, sir; that bites."

"No. Copperfield," says he, gravely, "that's not a dog. That's a boy. My instructions are, Copperfield, to put this placard on your back. I am sorry to make such a beginning with you, but I must do it."

10

With that, he took me down, and tied the placard, which was neatly constructed for the purpose, on my shoulders like a knapsack, and wherever I went, afterwards, I had the consolation of carrying it.

What I suffered from that placard, nobody can imagine. Whether it was possible for people to see me or not, I always fancied that somebody was reading it. It was no relief to turn round and find nobody; for wherever my back was, there I imagined somebody always to be. That cruel man with the wooden leg aggravated my sufferings. He was 20 in authority; and if he ever saw me leaning against a tree, or a wall, or the house, he roared out from his lodge-door, in a stupendous voice, "Hollo, you sir! You Copperfield! Show that badge conspicuous, or I'll report you!" I recollect that I positively began to have a dread of myself, as a kind of wild boy who did bite.

There was an old door in this playground, on which the boys had a custom of carving their names. It was completely covered with such inscriptions. In my dread of the end of the vacation and their coming back, I could not read 30 a boy's name, without inquiring, in what tone and with what emphasis he would read, "*Take care of him. He bites.*" There was one boy—a certain J. Steerforth—who cut his name very deep and very often, who, I conceived, would read it in a rather strong voice, and afterwards pull my hair. There was another boy, one Tommy Traddles,

who I dreaded would make game of it, and pretend to be dreadfully frightened of me. I have looked, a little shrinking creature, at that door, until the owners of all the names—there were five-and-forty of them in the school then, Mr. Mell said—seemed to send me to Coventry by general acclamation, and to cry out each in his own way, “*Take care of him. He bites!*”

I had long tasks every day to do with Mr. Mell; but I did them, there being no Mr. and Miss Murdstone here, and got 10 through them without disgrace. Before, and after them, I walked about—supervised, as I have mentioned, by the man with the wooden leg. At one we dined, Mr. Mell and I, at the upper end of a long bare dining-room, full of deal tables, and smelling of fat. Then, we had more tasks until tea, which Mr. Mell drank out of a blue tea-cup, and I out of a tin pot. All day long, and until seven or eight in the evening, Mr. Mell, at his own detached desk in the schoolroom, worked hard with pen, ink, ruler, books, and writing-paper, making out the bills (as I found) for last half-year.

20 Mr. Mell never said much to me, but he was never harsh to me. I suppose we were company to each other, without talking. I forgot to mention that he would talk to himself sometimes, and grin, and clench his fist, and grind his teeth, and pull his hair in an unaccountable manner. But he had these peculiarities: and at first they frightened me, though I soon got used to them.

CHAPTER V

MY “FIRST HALF” AT SALEM HOUSE

ONE day I was informed by Mr. Mell, that Mr. Creakle would be home that evening. In the evening, after tea, I heard that he was come. Before bedtime, I was fetched by the man 30 with the wooden leg to appear before him. I went on my

way, trembling, to Mr. Creakle's presence : which so abashed me, when I was ushered into it, that I hardly saw Mrs. Creakle, or Miss Creakle (who were both there, in the parlour), or anything but Mr. Creakle, a -tout gentleman with a bunch of watch-chain and seals, in a arm-chair.

" So ! " said Mr. Creakle. " This is the young gentleman whose teeth are to be filed ! Turn him round."

The wooden-legged man turned me about so as to exhibit the placard ; and having afforded me for a full survey of it, turned me about again, with my face to Mr. Creakle, and 10 posted himself at Mr. Creakle's side.

" Now," said Mr. Creakle. " What's the report of this boy ? "

" There's nothing against him yet," returned the man with the wooden leg. " There has been no opportunity."

I thought Mr. Creakle was disappointed. I thought Mrs. and Miss Creakle (at whom I now glanced for the first time, and who were, both, thin and quiet) were not disappointed. " Come here, sir ! " said Mr. Creakle, beckoning to me. " I have the happiness of knowing your father-in-law, and a 20 worthy man he is, and a man of a strong character. He knows me, and I know him. Do you know me ? Hey ? " said Mr. Creakle, pinching my ear with ferocious playfulness.

" Not yet, sir," I said, flinching with pain.

" I'll tell you what I am," whispered Mr. Creakle, letting my ear go at last, with a screw at parting that brought the water into my eyes. " I'm a Tartar. Now you have begun to know me, my young friend, and you may go. Take him away."

" If you please, sir——"

30

Mr. Creakle whispered, " Ha ! What's this ? " and bent his eyes upon me, as if he would have burnt me up with them.

" If you please, sir," I faltered, " if I might be allowed (I am very sorry indeed, sir, for what I did) to take this writing off, before the boys come back——"

Whether Mr. Creakle was in earnest, or whether he only did it to frighten me I don't know, but he made a burst out of his chair, before which I precipitately retreated, without waiting for the escort of the man with the wooden leg, and never once stopped until I reached my own bedroom, where, finding I was not pursued, I went to bed, as it was time, and lay quaking for a couple of hours.

Tommy Traddles was the first boy who returned. He introduced himself by informing me that I should find his 10 name on the right-hand corner of the gate, over the top bolt ; upon that I said, "Traddles ?" to which he replied, "The same," and then he asked me for a full account of myself and family.

It was a happy circumstance for me that Traddles came back first. He enjoyed my placard so much, that he saved me from the embarrassment of either disclosure or concealment, by presenting me to every other boy who came back, great or small, immediately on his arrival, in this form of introduction, "Look here ! Here's a game !" Happily, 20 too, the greater part of the boys came back low-spirited, and were not so boisterous at my expense as I had expected. Some of them certainly did dance about me like wild Indians, and the greater part could not resist the temptation of pretending that I was a dog, and patting and smoothing me lest I should bite, and saying, "Lie down, sir !" and calling me Towzer. This was naturally confusing, among so many strangers, and cost me some tears, but on the whole it was much better than I had anticipated.

I was not considered as being formally received into the 30 school, however, until J. Steerforth arrived. Before this boy, who was reputed to be a great scholar, and was very good-looking, and at least half a dozen years my senior, I was carried as before a magistrate. He inquired, under a shed in the playground, into the particulars of my punishment, and was pleased to express his opinion that it was "a jolly shame," for which I became bound to him ever afterwards.

"What money have you got, Copperfield?" he said, walking aside with me when he had disposed of my affair in these terms.

I told him seven shillings.

"You had better give it to me to take care of," he said. "At least, you can if you like. You needn't if you don't like."

I hastened to comply with his friendly suggestion, and opening Peggotty's purse, turned it upside down into his hand.

"Do you want to spend anything now?" he asked me. 10

"No, thank you," I replied.

"You can if you like, you know," said Steerforth. "Say the word."

"No, thank you, sir," I repeated.

"Perhaps you'd like to spend a couple of shillings or so in a bottle of currant wine by and by, up in the bedroom?" said Steerforth. "You belong to my bedroom, I find."

It certainly had not occurred to me before, but I said, Yes, I should like that.

"Very good," said Steerforth. "You'll be glad to spend another shilling or so in almond cakes, I daresay?"

I said, Yes, I should like that, too.

"And another shilling or so in biscuits, and another in fruit, eh?" said Steerforth. "I say, young Copperfield, you're going it!"

I smiled because he smiled, but I was a little troubled in my mind, too.

"Well!" said Steerforth. "We must make it stretch as far as we can; that's all. I'll do the best in my power for you. I can go out when I like, and I'll smuggle the 30 prog in." With these words he put the money in his pocket, and kindly told me not to make myself uneasy; he would take care it should be all right.

He was as good as his word, if that were all right which I had a secret misgiving was nearly all wrong—for I feared it was a waste of my mother's two halfcrown—though I

had preserved the piece of paper they were wrapped in, which was a precious saving. When we went upstairs to bed he produced the whole seven shillings' worth, and laid it out on my bed in the moonlight, saying—

“ There you are, young Copperfield, and a royal spread you've got ! ”

I couldn't think of doing the honours of the feast, at my time of life, while he was by ; my hand shook at the very thought of it. I begged him to do me the favour of presiding ; 10 and my request being seconded by the other boys who were in that room, he acceded to it, and sat upon my pillow, handing round the viands—with perfect fairness, I must say—and dispensing the currant wine in a little glass without a foot, which was his own property. As to me, I sat on his left hand, and the rest were grouped about us, on the nearest beds and on the floor.

The greater part of the guests had gone to bed as soon as the eating and drinking were over ; and we, who had remained whispering and listening half undressed, at last betook ourselves to bed, too. 20

“ Good-night, young Copperfield,” said Steerforth. “ I'll take care of you.”

“ You're very kind,” I gratefully returned. “ I am very much obliged to you.”

School began in earnest next day. A profound impression was made upon me, I remember, by the roar of voices in the schoolroom suddenly becoming hushed as death when Mr. Creakle entered after breakfast, and stood in the doorway looking round upon us like a giant in a story-book surveying 30 his captives.

“ Now, boys, this is a new half. Take care what you're about, in this new half. Come fresh up to the lessons, I advise you, for I come fresh up to the punishment. I won't flinch. It will be of no use your rubbing yourselves ; you won't rub the marks out that I shall give you. Now get to work, every boy ! ”

When this dreadful exordium was over, Mr. Creakle came to where I sat, and told me that if I were famous for biting, he was famous for biting, too. He then showed me the cane, and asked me what I thought of that for a tooth? Was it a sharp tooth, hey? Was it a double tooth, hey? Had it a deep prong, hey? Did it bite, he? Did it bite? At every question he gave me a fleshy cut with it that made me writhe; so I was very soon made free of Salem House (as Steerforth said), and very soon in tears also.

Not that I mean to say these were special marks of distinction, which only I received. On the contrary, a large majority of the boys (especially the smaller ones) were visited with similar instances of notice, as Mr. Creakle made the round of the schoolroom. Half the establishment was writhing and crying, before the day's work began; and how much of it had writhed and cried before the day's work was over, I am really afraid to recollect, lest I should seem to exaggerate.

Steerforth continued his protection of me, and proved a very useful friend; since nobody dared to annoy one whom he honoured with his countenance. He couldn't—or at all events, he didn't—defend me from Mr. Creakle, who was very severe with me; but whenever I had been treated worse than usual, he always told me that I wanted a little of his pluck, and that he wouldn't have stood it himself.

An accidental circumstance cemented the intimacy between Steerforth and me, in a manner that inspired me with great pride and satisfaction, though it sometimes led to inconvenience. It happened on one occasion, when he was doing me the honour of talking to me in the playground, that I hazarded the observation that something or somebody—I 30 forgot what now—was like something or somebody in "Peregrine Pickle." He said nothing at the time; but when I was going to bed at night, asked me if I had got that book.

I told him no, and explained that I had read it, and other similar books.

"And do you recollect them?" Steerforth said.

Oh, yes, I replied ; I had a good memory, and I believed I recollect them very well.

"Then I tell you what, young Copperfield," said Steerforth, "you shall tell 'em to me. I can't get to sleep very early at night, and I generally wake rather early in the morning. We'll go over 'em one after another. We'll make some regular Arabian Nights of it."

I felt extremely flattered by this arrangement, and we commenced carrying it into execution that very evening.

10 What ravages I committed on my favourite authors in the course of my interpretation of them, I am not in a condition to say, and should be very unwilling to know ; but I had a profound faith in them, and I had, to the best of my belief, a simple, earnest manner of narrating what I did narrate ; and these qualities went a long way.

The two outstanding features of the "half" were the dismissal of Mr. Mell after a quarrel in school with Steerforth, who twitted him with his poverty, and a visit of Mr. Peggotty and Ham to David, who presented his visitors to Steerforth. Mr. Peggotty invites Steerforth to accompany David on a visit to Yarmouth.

During the holidays, David is constantly found fault with at home, and through him Mr. and Miss Murdstone torment his mother, now thinner and more delicate than before.

CHAPTER VI

I HAVE A MEMORABLE BIRTHDAY. NO ONE WANTS ME AT HOME

I PASS over all that happened at school, until the anniversary of my birthday came round in March.

It is difficult for me to believe that there was a gap of full two months between my return to Salem House and the 20 arrival of that birthday. How well I recollect the kind of

day it was ! I smell the fog that hangs about the place ; I see the hoar frost, ghostly, through it ; I feel my rimey hair fall clammy on my cheek ; I look along the dim perspective of the schoolroom, with a spluttering candle here and there to light up the foggy morning, and the breath of the boys wreathing and smoking in the raw cold as they blow upon their fingers, and tap their feet upon the floor.

It was after breakfast that I was summoned into the parlour ; and there I found Mr. Creakle sitting at his breakfast with the cane and a newspaper before him, and 10 Mrs. Creakle with an opened letter in her hand.

" David Copperfield," said Mrs. Creakle, leading me to a sofa, and sitting down beside me. " I want to speak to you very particularly. I have something to tell you, my child."

Mr. Creakle, at whom of course I looked, shook his head without looking at me, and stopped up a sigh with a very large piece of buttered toast.

" You are too young to know how the world changes every day," said Mrs. Creakle, " and how the people in it pass away. But we all have to learn it, David ; some of us 20 when we are young, some of us when we are old, some of us at all times of our lives."

I looked at her earnestly.

" When you came away from home at the end of the vacation," said Mrs. Creakle, after a pause, " were they all well ? " After another pause, " Was your mama well ? "

I trembled without distinctly knowing why, and still looked at her earnestly, making no attempt to answer.

" Because," said she, " I grieve to tell you that I hear this morning your mama is very ill." 30

A mist rose between Mrs. Creakle and me, and her figure seemed to move in it for an instant. Then I felt the burning tears run down my face, and it was steady again.

" She is very dangerously ill," she added.

I knew all now.

" She is dead."

There was no need to tell me so. I had already broken out into a desolate cry, and felt an orphan in the wide world.

She was very kind to me. She kept me there all day, and left me alone sometimes ; and I cried, and wore myself to sleep, and awoke and cried again. When I could cry no more, I began to think ; and then the oppression on my breast was heaviest, and my grief a dull pain that there was no ease for.

I went home next night, and was in Peggotty's arms before 10 I got to the door. Her grief burst out when she first saw me ; but she controlled it soon, and spoke in whispers, and walked softly, as if the dead could be disturbed. She had not been in bed, I found, for a long time. She sat up at night still, and watched. As long as her poor dear pretty was above the ground, she said, she would never desert her.

Mr. Murdstone took no heed of me when I went into the parlour where he was, but sat by the fireside, weeping silently, and pondering in his elbow-chair. Miss Murdstone, who was busy at her writing-desk, which was covered with letters 20 and papers, gave me her cold finger-nails, and asked me, in an iron whisper, if I had been measured for my mourning.

I said "Yes."

"And your shirts," said Miss Murdstone ; "have you brought 'em home ?"

"Yes, ma'am. I have brought home all my clothes."

In these days before the funeral, I saw but little of Peggotty, except that, in passing up or down stairs, I always found her close to the room where my mother lay, and except that she came to me every night, and sat by my bed's head while 30 I went to sleep. A day or two before the burial she took me into the room. I only recollect that underneath some white covering on the bed, with a beautiful cleanliness and freshness all around it, there seemed to me to lie embodied the solemn stillness that was in the house ; and that when she would have turned the cover gently back, I cried, "Oh, no ! oh, no !" and held her hand.

If the funeral had been yesterday, I could not recollect it better. We stand around the grave. The day seems different to me from every other day, and the light not of the same colour—of a sadder colour.

It is over, and the earth is filled in and we turn to come away. Before us stands our house, so pretty and unchanged, so linked in my mind with the young idea of what is gone, that all my sorrow has been nothing to the sorrow it calls forth.

I knew that Peggotty would come to me in my room. 10 She sat down by my side upon my little bed; and holding my hand, and sometimes putting it to her lips, and sometimes smoothing it with hers, told me, in her way, all that she had to tell concerning what had happened.

From the moment of my knowing of the death of my mother, the idea of her as she had been of late had vanished from me. The mother who lay in the grave, was the mother of my infancy.

After the funeral, Miss Murdstone gives Peggotty a month's warning to leave, and as David is now wanted at home even less than before, he is allowed to accompany Peggotty on a fortnight's visit to her brother at Yarmouth.

On the very first evening after our arrival at Yarmouth, Mr. Barkis appeared in an exceedingly vacant and awkward 20 condition, and with a bundle of oranges tied up in a hand-kerchief. As he made no allusion of any kind to this property, he was supposed to have left it behind by accident when he went away; until Ham, running after him to restore it, came back with the information that it was intended for Peggotty. After that occasion he appeared every evening at exactly the same hour, and always with a little bundle, to which he never alluded, and which he regularly put behind the door, and left there. These offerings of affection were of a most various and eccentric description. Among them 30 I remember a double set of pig's trotters, a huge pin-cushion,

half a bushel or so of apples, a pair of jet earrings, some Spanish onions, a box of dominoes, a canary bird and cage, and a leg of pickled pork.

Mr. Barkis's wooing, as I remember it, was altogether of a peculiar kind. He very seldom said anything; but would sit by the fire in much the same attitude as he sat in his cart, and stare heavily at Peggotty, who was opposite. He seemed to enjoy himself very much, and not to feel at all called upon to talk.

10 At length, when the term of my visit was nearly expired, it was given out that Peggotty and Mr. Barkis were going to make a day's holiday together, and that little Em'ly and I were to accompany them. I had but a broken sleep the night before, in anticipation of the pleasure of a whole day with Em'ly. We were all astir betimes in the morning; and while we were yet at breakfast, Mr. Barkis appeared in the distance, driving a chaise-cart towards the object of his affections.

When we were all in a bustle outside the door, I found 20 that Mr. Peggotty was prepared with an old shoe, which was to be thrown after us for luck, and which he offered to Mrs. Gummidge for that purpose.

Mrs. Gummidge threw it; and, I am sorry to relate, cast a damp upon the festive character of our departure, by immediately bursting into tears, and sinking subdued into the arms of Ham, with the declaration that she knewed she was a burden, and had better be carried to the House at once.

Away we went, however, on our holiday excursion; and the first thing we did was to stop at a church, where Mr. 30 Barkis tied the horse to some rails, and went in with Peggotty, leaving little Em'ly and me alone in the chaise.

Mr. Barkis and Peggotty were a good while in the church, but came out at last, and then we drove away into the country. As we were going along, Mr. Barkis turned to me, and said, with a wink—by the bye, I should hardly have thought, before, that he could wink—

MRS. GUMMIDGE CASTS A DAMP ON OUR DEPARTURE.



" What name was it as I wrote up in the cart ? "

" Clara Peggotty," I answered.

" What name would it be as I should write up now ? "

" Clara Peggotty, again ? " I suggest d.

" Clara Peggotty BARKIS ! " he ret rned, and burst into a roar of laughter that shook the chais .

In a word, they were married, and ha l gone into the church for no other purpose.

We came to the old boat again in good time at night ; and there Mr. and Mrs. Barkis bade u good-bye, and drove 10 away snugly to their own home. I felt then, for the first time, that I had lost Peggotty. I should have gone to bed with a sore heart indeed under any other roof but that which sheltered little Em'ly's head.

Mr. Peggotty and Ham knew what was in my thoughts as well as I did, and were ready with some supper and their hospitable faces to drive it away. Little Em'ly came and sat beside me on the locker, for the only time in all that visit ; and it was altogether a wonderful close to a wonderful day.

20

With morning came Peggotty ; who called to me, as usual, under my window as if Mr. Barkis the carrier had been from first to last a dream too. After breakfast she took me to her own home, and a beautiful little home it was.

I took leave of Mr. Peggotty, and Ham, and Mrs. Gummidge, and little Em'ly, that day ; and passed the night at Peggotty's, in a little room in the roof.

I went home in the morning, with Peggotty and Mr. Barkis in the cart. They left me at the gate, not easily or lightly ; and it was a strange sight to me to see the cart go on, taking 30 Peggotty away, and leaving me under the old elm-trees looking at the house, in which there was no face to look on mine with love or liking any more.

And now I fell into a state of neglect, which I cannot look back upon without compassion. I fell at once into a solitary condition—apart from all friendly notice, apart from the

society of all other boys of my own age, apart from all companionship but my own spiritless thoughts—which seems to cast its gloom upon this paper as I write.

What would I have given to have been sent to the hardest school that ever was kept!—to have been taught something, anyhow, anywhere! No such hope dawned upon me. They disliked me; and they sullenly, sternly, steadily overlooked me. I think Mr. Murdstone's means were straitened at about this time; but it is little to the purpose. He could 10 not bear me; and in putting me from him he tried, as I believe, to put away the notion that I had any claim upon him—and succeeded.

I was seldom allowed to visit Peggotty. Faithful to her promise, she either came to see me, or met me somewhere near, once every week, and never empty-handed; but many and bitter were the disappointments I had, in being refused permission to pay a visit to her at her house. Some few times, however, at long intervals, I was allowed to go there; and then I found out that Mr. Barkis was something of a 20 miser, or as Peggotty dutifully expressed it, was “a little near,” and kept a heap of money in a box under his bed, which he pretended was only full of coats and trousers.

CHAPTER VII

I BEGIN LIFE ON MY OWN ACCOUNT, AND DON'T LIKE IT

I now approach a period of my life, which I can never lose the remembrance of, while I remember anything; and the recollection of which has often, without my invocation, come before me like a ghost, and haunted happier times.

“I suppose you know, David,” said Mr. Murdstone to me one morning after breakfast, “that I am not rich. At any-rate, you know it now. You have received some considerable

education already. Education is costly ; and even if it were not, and I could afford it, I am o' opinion that it would not be at all advantageous to you to be kept at a school. What is before you, is a fight with the world ; and the sooner you begin it, the better."

I think it occurred to me that I had already begun it, in my poor way : but it occurs to me now, whether or no.

" You have heard 'the counting-house' mentioned sometimes," said Mr. Murdstone.

" The counting-house, sir ? " I repeated.

10

" Of Murdstone & Grinby, in the wine trade," he replied.

" I think I have heard the business mentioned, sir," I said, " but I don't know when."

" It does not matter when," he returned. " Mr. Quinion manages that business. Mr. Quinion suggests that it gives employment to some other boys, and that he sees no reason why it shouldn't, on the same terms, give employment to you. Those terms are, that you will earn enough for yourself to provide for your eating and drinking, and pocket-money. Your lodging (which I have arranged for) will be paid £0 by me. So will your washing——"

" —Which will be kept down to my estimate," said his sister.

" Your clothes will be looked after for you, too," said Mr. Murdstone ; " as you will not be able, yet awhile, to get them for yourself. So you are now going to London, David, with Mr. Quinion, to begin the world on your own account."

" In short, you are provided for," observed his sister ; " and will please to do your duty."

Thus, I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind 30 in the service of Murdstone & Grinby.

Murdstone & Grinby's warehouse was at the water side. It was down in Blackfriars. It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own, abutting on the water when the tide was in, and on the mud when the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt

and smoke of a hundred years, I daresay ; its decaying floors and staircase ; the squeaking and scuffling of the old gray rats down in the cellars ; and the dirt and rottenness of the place ; are things, not of many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant.

Murdstone & Grinby's trade was among a good many kinds of people, but an important branch of it was the supply of wines and spirits to certain packet-ships. I forget now where they chiefly went, but I think there were some among 10 them that made voyages both to the East and West Indies. I know that a great many empty bottles were one of the consequences of this traffic, and that certain men and boys were employed to examine them against the light, and reject those that were flawed, and to rinse and wash them. When the empty bottles ran short, there were labels to be pasted on full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, or seals to be put upon the corks, or finished bottles to be packed in casks. All this work was my work, and of the boys employed upon it I was one.

20 There were three or four of us, counting me. My working place was established in a corner of the warehouse, where Mr. Quinion could see me, when he chose to stand up on the bottom rail of his stool in the counting-house, and look at me through a window above the desk. Hither, on the first morning of my so auspiciously beginning life on my own account, the oldest of the regular boys was summoned to show me my business. His name was Mick Walker, and he wore a ragged apron and a paper cap. He informed me that our principal associate would be another boy whom he 30 introduced by the—to me—extraordinary name of Mealy Potatoes. I discovered, however, that this youth had not been christened by that name, but that it had been bestowed upon him in the warehouse, on account of his complexion, which was pale or mealy.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship ; compared these henceforth

every-day associates with those of my happier childhood—not to say with Steerforth, Traddles, and the rest of those boys; and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom

The counting-house clock was at half-past twelve, and there was general preparation for going to dinner, when Mr. Quinion tapped at the counting-house window, and beckoned to me to go in. I went in, and found there a stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one, and 10 very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face, which he turned full upon me. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirt-collar on. He carried a jaunty sort of a stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it; and a quizzing glass hung outside his coat—for ornament, I afterwards found, as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.

"This," said Mr. Quinion, in allusion to myself, "is he."

"This," said the stranger, with a certain condescending roll in his voice, and a certain indescribable air of doing 20 something genteel, which impressed me very much, "is Master Copperfield."

"This is Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion to me.

"Ahem!" said the stranger, "that is my name."

"Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion, "is known to Mr. Murdstone. He takes orders for us on commission, when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone on the subject of your lodgings, and he will receive you as a lodger."

"My address," said Mr. Micawber, "is Windsor Terrace, 30 City Road. I—in short," said Mr. Micawber, with the same genteel air, and in a burst of confidence—"I live there."

I made him a bow.

"Under the impression," said Mr. Micawber, "that your peregrinations in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating

the arcana of the Modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road—in short," said Mr. Micawber, in another burst of confidence, "that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening, and install you in the knowledge of the nearest way."

I thanked him with all my heart, for it was friendly in him to offer to take that trouble.

"At what hour," said Mr. Micawber, "shall I——"

"At about eight," said Mr. Quinion.

10 "At about eight," said Mr. Micawber. "I beg to wish you good-day, Mr. Quinion. I will intrude no longer."

So he put on his hat, and went out with his cane under his arm: very upright, and humming a tune when he was clear of the counting-house.

Mr. Quinion then formally engaged me to be as useful as I could in the warehouse of Murdstone & Grinby, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. He paid me a week down (from his own pocket, I believe), and I gave Mealy sixpence out of it to get my trunk carried to Windsor Terrace 20 at night: it being too heavy for my strength, small as it was. I paid sixpence more for my dinner, which was a meat pie and a turn at a neighbouring pump; and passed the hour which was allowed for that meal in walking about the streets.

At the appointed time in the evening, Mr. Micawber reappeared.

Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace, he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour with a baby.

30 There were two other children: Master Micawber, aged about four, and Miss Micawber, aged about three. These, and a dark-complexioned young woman, with a habit of snorting, who was servant to the family, and informed me, before half an hour had expired, that she was "a Orfing," and came from St. Luke's workhouse, in the neighbourhood, completed the establishment.

"I never thought," said Mrs. Micawber, when she came to show me the apartment, "before I was married, when I lived with papa and mama, that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way."

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

"Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelming, just at present," said Mrs. Micawber; "and whether it is possible to bring him through them, I don't know."

In this house, and with this family. I passed my leisure time. My own exclusive breakfast of a penny loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided myself. I kept another small loaf, and a modicum of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. This made a hole in the six or seven shillings, I know well; and I was out at the warehouse all day, and had to support myself on that money all the week. From Monday morning until Saturday night, I had no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no assistance, no support, of any kind, from anyone, that I can call to mind, 20 as I hope to go to heaven!

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources or the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling were given me by Mr. Quinion at any time, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning until night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond. 30

Yet I held some station at Murdstone & Grinby's too. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manner were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They and the men generally spoke of me as "the little gent," or "the young Suffolker."

Mr. Micawber's difficulties were an addition to the distressed state of my mind. I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail ; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, "in case anything turned up," which was his favourite expression. And Mrs. Micawber was just the same.

At last Mr. Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning, and carried over to the 10 King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me, as he went out of the house, that the God of day had gone down upon him—and I really thought his heart was broken, and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game at skittles before noon.

On the first Sunday after he was taken there, I was to go and see him, and have dinner with him. He was waiting for me within the gate, and we went up to his room (top storey but one), and cried very much. He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate ; and to 20 observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable. After which he borrowed a shilling of me for porter, gave me a written order on Mrs. Micawber for the amount, and put away his pocket-handkerchief, and cheered up.

At last Mrs. Micawber resolved to move into the prison, where Mr. Micawber had now secured a room to himself. So I took the key of the house to the landlord, who was very 30 glad to get it ; and the beds were sent over to the King's Bench, except mine, for which a little room was hired outside the walls in the neighbourhood of the Institution, very much to my satisfaction, since the Micawbers and I had become too used to one another, in our troubles, to part. The Orfing was likewise accommodated with an inexpensive lodging in the same neighbourhood.

All this time I was working at Murdstone & Grinby's in the same common way, and with the same common companions, and with the same sense of unmerited degradation as at first. But I never, happily for me no doubt, made a single acquaintance, or spoke to any of the many boys whom I saw daily in going to the warehouse in coming from it, and in prowling about the streets at meal-times. I led the same secretly unhappy life ; but I led it in the same lonely, self-reliant manner. The only change I am conscious of are, firstly, that I had grown more sallow, and secondly, 10 that I was now relieved of much of the weight of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber's cares ; for some relatives or friends had engaged to help them in their present pass, and they lived more comfortably in the prison than they had lived for a long while out of it. I used to breakfast with them now, in virtue of some arrangement, of which I have forgotten the details. In the evening I used to go back to the prison, and walk up and down the parade with Mr. Micawber ; or play cards with Mrs. Micawber, and hear reminiscences of her papa and mama. Whether Mr. Murdstone knew where 20 I was, I am unable to say. I never told them at Murdstone & Grinby's.

Mr. Micawber's affairs, although past their crisis, were very much involved by reason of a certain "Deed," of which I used to hear a great deal. At last this document appeared to be got out of the way, somehow ; at all events it ceased to be the rock ahead it had been ; and Mrs. Micawber informed me that "her family" had decided that Mr. Micawber should apply for his release under the Insolvent Debtors' Act, which would set him free, she expected, in about six weeks. 30

"And then," said Mr. Micawber, who was present, "I have no doubt I shall, please Heaven, begin to be beforehand with the world, and to live in a perfectly new manner, if—in short, if anything turns up."

CHAPTER VIII

LIKING LIFE ON MY OWN ACCOUNT NO BETTER,
I FORM A GREAT RESOLUTION

On his discharge from prison, Mr. Micawber takes his family to Plymouth, where his wife's relatives have offered to help him. After their departure, David goes to begin his weary day at Murdstone & Grinby's.

BUT with no intention of passing many more weary days there. No. I had resolved to run away. To go, by some means or other, down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt, Miss Betsey.

I don't know how this desperate idea came into my brain. But, once there, it remained there ; and hardened into a purpose than which I have never entertained a more determined purpose in my life. I am far from sure that I believed there was anything hopeful in it, but my mind was thoroughly

10 made up that it must be carried into execution.

As I did not even know where Miss Betsey lived, I wrote a long letter to Peggotty and asked her, incidentally, if she remembered ; pretending that I had heard of such a lady living at a certain place I named at random, and had a curiosity to know if it were the same. In the course of that letter, I told Peggotty that I had a particular occasion for half a guinea ; and that if she could lend me that sum until I could repay it, I should be very much obliged to her, and would tell her afterwards what I had wanted it for.

20 Peggotty's answer soon arrived, and was, as usual, full of affectionate devotion. She enclosed the half-guinea (I was afraid she must have had a world of trouble to get it out of Mr. Barkis's box), and told me that Miss Betsey lived near Dover, but whether at Dover itself, at Hythe, Sandgate, or Folkestone, she could not say. One of our men, however, informing me, on my asking him about these places,

that they were all close together, I deemed this enough for my object, and resolved to set out at the end of that week.

Being a very honest little creature and unwilling to disgrace the memory I was going to leave behind me at Murdstone & Grinby's, I considered myself bound to remain until Saturday night; and, as I had been paid a week's wages in advance when I first came there, not to present myself in the counting-house at the usual hour to receive my stipend. For this express reason I had borrowed the half-guinea, that I might not be without a fund for my travelling expenses.

My box was at my old lodging, over the water, and I had written a direction for it on the back of one of our address cards that we nailed on the casks: "Master David, to be left till called for, at the Coach Office, Dover." This I had in my pocket ready to put on the box, after I should have got it out of the house; and as I went towards my lodging, I looked about me for someone who would help me to carry it to the booking-office.

There was a long-legged young man with a very little, 20 empty donkey-cart, standing near the Obelisk, in the Blackfriars Road, whose eye I caught as I was going by, and who, addressing me as "Sixpennorth o' bad ha'pence," hoped "I should know him agin to swear to"—in allusion, I have no doubt, to my staring at him. I stopped to assure him that I had not done so in bad manners, but uncertain whether he might or might not like a job.

"Wot job?" said the long-legged young man.

"To move a box," I answered.

"Wot box?" said the long-legged young man. 30

I told him mine, which was down that street there, and which I wanted him to take to the Dover coach-office for sixpence.

"Done with you for a tanner!" said the long-legged young man, and directly got upon his cart, which was nothing but a large wooden tray on wheels, and rattled away at such

a rate, that it was as much as I could do to keep pace with the donkey.

There was a defiant manner about this young man, and particularly about the way in which he chewed straw as he spoke to me, that I did not much like; as the bargain was made, however, I took him upstairs to the room I was leaving, and we brought the box down, and put it on his cart. Now, I was unwilling to put the direction-card on there, lest any of my landlord's family should fathom what I was doing,
10 and detain me; so I said to the young man that I would be glad if he would stop for a minute, when he came to the dead-wall of the King's Bench prison. The words were no sooner out of my mouth than he rattled away, as if he, my box, the cart, and the donkey, were all equally mad; and I was quite out of breath with running and calling after him, when I caught him at the place appointed.

Being much flushed and excited, I tumbled my half-guinea out of my pocket in pulling the card out. I put it in my mouth for safety, and though my hands trembled a good
20 deal, had just tied the card on very much to my satisfaction, when I felt myself violently chucked under the chin by the long-legged young man, and saw my half-guinea fly out of my mouth into his hand.

"Wot!" said the young man, seizing me by my jacket collar, with a frightful grin. "This is a pollis case, is it? You're a-going to bolt, are you? Come to the pollis, you young warmin; come to the pollis!"

"Give me my money back, if you please," said I, very much frightened, "and leave me alone."

30 "Come to the pollis!" said the young man. "You shall prove it yourn to the pollis!"

"Give me my box and money, will you?" I cried, bursting into tears.

The young man still replied, "Come to the pollis!" and was driving me against the donkey in a violent manner, as if there were any affinity between that animal and a magis-

trate; when he changed his mind, jumped into the cart, sat upon my box, and, exclaiming that he would drive to the pollis straight, rattled away harder than ever.

I ran after him as fast as I could, but I had no breath to call out with, and should not have dared to call out now if I had. I narrowly escaped being run over, twenty times at least, in half a mile. Now I lost him, now I saw him, now I lost him, now I was cut at with a whip, now shouted at, now down in the mud, now up again, now running into somebody's arms, now running headlong at a post. At length, confused by fright and heat, and doubting whether half London might not by this time be turning out for my apprehension, I left the young man to go where he would with my box and money ; and, panting and crying, but never stopping, faced about for Greenwich, which I had understood was on the Dover Road ; taking very little more out of the world, towards the retreat of my aunt, Miss Betsey, than I had brought into it, on the night when my arrival gave her so much umbrage.

CHAPTER IX

THE SEQUEL OF MY RESOLUTION

FOR anything I know, I may have had some wild idea of 20 running all the way to Dover, when I gave up the pursuit of the young man with the donkey-cart, and started for Greenwich. My scattered senses were soon collected as to that point, if I had ; for I came to a stop in the Kent Road. Here I sat down on a door-step, quite spent and exhausted with the efforts I had already made, and with hardly breath enough to cry for the loss of my box and half-guinea.

It was by this time dark ; I heard the clocks strike ten, as I sat resting. But it was a summer night, fortunately, and fine weather. When I had recovered my breath, and 30

had got rid of a stifling sensation in my throat, I rose up and went on.

But my standing possessed of only three-halfpence in the world (and I am sure I wonder how *they* came to be left in my pocket on a Saturday night !) troubled me none the less because I went on. I trudged on miserably, though as fast as I could, until I happened to pass a little shop, where it was written up that ladies' and gentlemen's wardrobes were bought, and that the best price was given for rags, 10 bones, and kitchen-stuff. The master of this shop was sitting at the door in his shirt-sleeves, smoking.

I went up the next by-street, took off my waistcoat, rolled it neatly under my arm, and came back to the shop-door. "If you please, sir," I said, "I am to sell this for a fair price."

Mr. Dolloby—Dolloby was the name over the shop-door, at least—took the waistcoat, went into the shop, followed by me, spread the waistcoat on the counter, and ultimately said—

20 "What do you call a price, now, for this here little weskit ? "

"Oh ! you know best, sir," I returned, modestly.

"I can't be buyer and seller too," said Mr. Dolloby. "Put a price on this here little weskit."

"Would eighteenpence be—" I hinted, after some hesitation.

Mr. Dolloby rolled it up again, and gave it me back. "I should rob my family," he said, "if I was to offer ninepence for it."

My circumstances being so very pressing, I said I would 30 take ninepence for it, if he pleased. Mr. Dolloby, not without some grumbling, gave ninepence. I wished him good-night, and walked out of the shop, the richer by that sum, and the poorer by a waistcoat. But when I buttoned my jacket, that was not much.

A plan had occurred to me for passing the night, which I was going to carry into execution. This was, to lie behind

the wall at the back of my old school, in a corner where there used to be a haystack.

I had had a hard day's work, and was pretty well jaded when I came climbing out, at last, upon the level of Blackheath. It cost me some trouble to find out Salem House; but I found it, and I found a haystack in the corner, and I lay down by it; having first walked round the wall, and looked up at the windows, and seen that all was dark and silent within. Never shall I forget the lonely sensation of first lying down, without a roof above my head !

10

The warm beams of the sun, and the ringing of the getting-up bell at Salem House, awoke me. I crept away from the wall as Mr. Creakle's boys were getting up, and struck into the long, dusty track which I had first known to be the Dover Road when I was one of them, and when I little expected that any eyes would ever see me, the wayfarer I was now, upon it.

I got, that Sunday, through three-and-twenty miles on the straight road, though not very easily, for I was new to that kind of toil. I see myself, as evening closes in, coming 20 over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, and eating bread that I had bought for supper. I sought no shelter but the sky; and toiling into Chatham, crept, at last, upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. Here I lay down, near a cannon; and, happy in the society of the sentry's footsteps, though he knew no more of my being above him than the boys at Salem House had known of my lying by the wall, slept soundly until morning.

Very stiff and sore of foot I was in the morning. Feeling 30 that I could go but a very little way that day, if I were to reserve any strength for getting to my journey's end, I resolved to make the sale of my jacket its principal business. Accordingly, I took the jacket off, that I might learn to do without it; and carrying it under my arm, began a tour of inspection of the various slop-shops.

At last I found one that I thought looked promising, at the corner of a dirty lane. Into this shop, which was low and small, and which was darkened rather than lighted by a little window overhung with clothes, and was descended into by some steps, I went with a palpitating heart; which was not relieved when an ugly old man, with the lower part of his face all covered with a stubbly, gray beard, rushed out of a dirty den behind it, and seized me by the hair of my head. He was a dreadful old man to look at, in a filthy
10 flannel waistcoat.

"Oh, what do you want?" grinned this old man, in a fierce, monotonous whine. "Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh, goroo, goroo!"

I was so much dismayed by these words, and particularly by the repetition of the last unknown one, which was a kind of rattle in his throat, that I could make no answer; hereupon the old man, still holding me by the hair, repeated—

"Oh, what do you want? Oh, my eyes and limbs, what
20 do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh, goroo!" which he screwed out of himself, with an energy that made his eyes start in his head.

"I wanted to know," I said, trembling, "if you would buy a jacket."

"Oh, let's see the jacket!" cried the old man. "Oh, my heart on fire, show the jacket to us! Oh, my eyes and limbs, bring the jacket out!"

With that he took his trembling hands, which were like the claws of a great bird, out of my hair; and put on a pair
30 of spectacles, not at all ornamental to his inflamed eyes.

"Oh, how much for the jacket?" cried the old man, after examining it. "Oh—goroo!—how much for the jacket?"

"Half-a-crown," I answered, recovering myself.

"Oh, my lungs and liver," cried the old man, "no! Oh, my eyes, no! Oh, my limbs, no! Eighteenpence. Goroo!"

"Well," said I, glad to have closed the bargain, "I'll take eighteenpence."

"Oh, my liver!" cried the old man, throwing the jacket on a shelf. "Get out of the shop! Oh, my lungs, get out of the shop! Oh, my eyes and limbs—goroo!—don't ask for money; make it an exchange."

I never was so frightened in my life, before or since; but I told him humbly that I wanted money, and that nothing else was of any use to me, but that he would wait for it, as he desired, outside, and had no wish to hurry him. So I went outside, and sat down in the shade in a corner. And I sat there so many hours, that the shade became sunlight, and the sunlight became shade again, and still I sat there waiting for the money.

He made many attempts to induce me to consent to an exchange; at one time coming out with a fishing rod, at another with a fiddle, at another with a cocked hat, at another with a flute. But I resisted all these overtures, and sat there in desperation; each time asking him, with tears in my eyes, for my money or my jacket. At last he began to pay me in halfpence at a time; and was full two hours getting by easy stages to a shilling.

"Oh, my eyes and limbs!" he then cried, peeping hideously out of the shop, after a long pause, "will you go for twopence more?"

"I can't," I said; "I shall be starved."

"Oh, my lungs and liver, will you go for threepence?"

"I would go for nothing, if I could," I said, "but I want the money badly."

"Oh, go—roo! will you go for fourpence?"

30

I was so faint and weary that I closed with this offer; and taking the money out of his claw, not without trembling, went away more hungry and thirsty than I had ever been, a little before sunset. But at an expense of threepence I soon refreshed myself completely; and, being in better spirits then, limped seven miles upon my road.

My bed at night was under another haystack, where I rested comfortably, after having washed my blistered feet in a stream, and dressed them as well as I was able, with some cool leaves. When I took the road again next morning, I found that it lay through a succession of hop-grounds and orchards. It was sufficiently late in the year for the orchards to be ruddy with ripe apples ; and in a few places the hop-pickers were already at work. I thought it all extremely beautiful, and made up my mind to sleep among the hops
10 that night : imagining some cheerful companionship in the long perspectives of poles with the graceful leaves twining round them.

Under all the difficulties of my journey, I seemed to be sustained and led on by my fanciful picture of my mother in her youth, before I came into the world. When I came, at last, upon the bare, wide downs near Dover, it relieved the solitary aspect of the scene with hope ; and not until I reached that first great aim of my journey, and actually set foot in the town itself, on the sixth day of my flight,
20 did it desert me. But then, strange to say, when I stood with my ragged shoes, and my dusty, sunburnt, half-clothed figure, in the place so long desired, it seemed to vanish like a dream, and to leave me helpless and dispirited.

I inquired about my aunt among the boatmen, and received various answers. I felt more miserable and destitute than I had done at any period of my running away. My money was all gone, I had nothing left to dispose of ; I was hungry, thirsty, and worn out ; and seemed as distant from my end as if I had remained in London.

30 The morning had worn away in these inquiries, and I was sitting on the step of an empty shop at a street corner, near the market-place, when a fly-driver, coming by with his carriage, dropped a horse-cloth. Something good-natured in the man's face, as I handed it up, encouraged me to ask him if he could tell me where Miss Trotwood lived ; though I had asked the question so often, that it almost died upon my lips.

"Trotwood," said he. "Let me see. I know the name, too. Old lady?"

"Yes," I said, "rather."

"Pretty stiff in the back?" said he, making himself upright.

"Yes," I said. "I should think it very likely."

"Why then, I tell you what," said he. "If you go up there," pointing with his whip towards the heights, "and keep right on till you come to some houses facing the sea, I think you'll hear of her. My opinion is she won't stand 10 anything, so here's a penny for you."

I accepted the gift thankfully, and bought a loaf with it. Despatching this refreshment by the way, I went in the direction my friend had indicated, and walked on a good distance without coming to the houses he had mentioned. At length I saw some before me; and approaching them, went into a little shop, and inquired if they would have the goodness to tell me where Miss Trotwood lived. I addressed myself to a man behind the counter, who was weighing some rice for a young woman; but the latter, taking the 20 inquiry to herself, turned round quickly.

"My mistress?" she said. "What do you want with her, boy?"

"I want," I replied, "to speak to her, if you please."

"To beg of her, you mean," retorted the damsel.

"No," I said, "indeed." But suddenly remembering that in truth I came for no other purpose, I held my peace in confusion, and felt my face burn.

My aunt's handmaid, as I suppose she was from what she had said, put her rice in a little basket and walked out 30 of the shop; telling me that I could follow her, if I wanted to know where Miss Trotwood lived. I followed the young woman, and we soon came to a very neat little cottage with cheerful bow-windows: in front of it, a small, square, gravelled court or garden full of flowers, carefully tended, and smelling deliciously.

" This is Miss Trotwood's," said the young woman. " Now you know ; and that's all I have got to say." With which words she hurried into the house, as if to shake off the responsibility of my appearance ; and left me standing at the garden-gate.

I was on the point of slinking off, to think how I'd best proceed, when there came out of the house a lady with a handkerchief tied over her cap, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, wearing a gardening pocket like a toll-
10 man's apron, and carrying a great knife. I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey, for she came stalking out of the house, exactly as my poor mother had so often described her stalking up our garden at Blunderstone Rookery.

" Go away ! " said Miss Betsey, shaking her head, and making a distant chop in the air with her knife. " Go along ! No boys here ! "

" If you please, ma'am." I began.

She started, and looked up.

" If you please, aunt."

20 " EH ? " exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

" If you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

" Oh, Lord ! " said my aunt, and sat flat down in the garden-path.

" I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone, in Suffolk—where you came, on the night when I was born, and saw my dear mama. I have been very unhappy since she died. I have been slighted, and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made me run
30 away to you. I was robbed at first setting out, and have walked all the way, and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey." Here my self-support gave way all at once ; and with a movement of my hands, intended to show her my ragged state, and call it to witness that I had suffered something, I broke into a passion of crying, which I suppose had been pent up within me all the week.



I MAKE MYSELF KNOWN TO MY AUNT.

[Face page 58.]

My aunt, with every sort of expression but wonder discharged from her countenance, sat on the gravel, staring at me, until I began to cry ; when she got up in a great hurry, collared me, and took me into the parlour. She put me on the sofa, with a shawl under my head, and the handkerchief from her own head under my feet, lest I should sully the cover ; and then, sitting herself down, jaculated at intervals, “ Mercy on us ! ” letting those exclamations off like minute guns.

After a time she rang the bell. “ Janet,” said my aunt, 10 when her servant came in, “ go upstairs, give my compliments to Mr. Dick, and say I wish to speak to him.”

Janet looked a little surprised to see me lying stiffly on the sofa (I was afraid to move lest it should be displeasing to my aunt), but went on her errand. My aunt, with her hands behind her, walked up and down the room, until the gentleman came in laughing.

“ Mr. Dick,” said my aunt, “ don’t be a fool, because nobody can be more discreet than you can, when you choose. We all know that. So don’t be a fool, whatever you are.” 20

The gentleman was serious immediately.

“ Mr. Dick,” said my aunt, “ you have heard me mention David Copperfield ? Now don’t pretend not to have a memory, because you and I know better.”

“ David Copperfield ? ” said Mr. Dick, who did not appear to me to remember much about it. “ *David Copperfield* ? Oh yes, to be sure. David, certainly.”

“ Well,” said my aunt, “ this is his boy—his son. He would be as like his father as it’s possible to be, if he was not so like his mother, too.”

“ His son ? ” said Mr. Dick. “ David’s son ? Indeed ! ”

“ Yes,” pursued my aunt, “ and he has done a pretty piece of business. He has run away. Ah ! His sister, Betsey Trotwood, never would have run away.” My aunt shook her head firmly, confident in the character and behaviour of the girl who never was born.

"Oh ! you think she wouldn't have run away ?" said Mr. Dick.

"Bless and save the man," exclaimed my aunt, sharply, "how he talks ! Don't I know she wouldn't ? She would have lived with her godmother, and we should have been devoted to one another. Where, in the name of wonder, should his sister, Betsey Trotwood, have run from, or to ?"

"Nowhere," said Mr. Dick.

"Well then," returned my aunt, softened by the reply,
10 "how can you pretend to be wool-gathering, Dick, when you are as sharp as a surgeon's lancet ? Now, here you see young David Copperfield, and the question I put to you is, what shall I do with him ?"

"What shall you do with him ?" said Mr. Dick, feebly, scratching his head. "Oh ! do with him ?"

"Yes," said my aunt, with a grave look and her forefinger held up. "Come ! I want some very sound advice."

"Why, if I was you," said Mr. Dick, considering and looking vacantly at me. "I should——" The contemplation of me seemed to inspire him with a sudden idea, and he added, briskly, "I should wash him !"

"Janet," said my aunt, turning round with a quiet triumph, which I did not then understand, "Mr. Dick sets us all right. Heat the bath !"

Mr. Dick was gray-headed and florid : I should have said all about him, in saying so, had not his head been curiously bowed—not by age ; it reminded me of one of Mr. Creakle's boys' heads after a beating—and his gray eyes prominent and large, with a strange kind of watery brightness in them
30 that made me, in combination with his vacant manner, his submission to my aunt, and his childish delight when she praised him, suspect him of being a little mad ; though, if he were mad, how he came to be there puzzled me extremely.

Janet had gone away to get the bath ready, when my aunt, to my great alarm, became in one moment rigid with

indignation, and had hardly voice to cry out, "Janet ! Donkeys ! "

Upon which, Janet came running up the stairs as if the house were in flames, darted out on a little piece of green in front, and warned off two saddle donkeys, lady-ridden, that had presumed to set hoof upon it ; while my aunt, rushing out of the house, seized the tail of a third animal laden with a bestriding child, turned him, led him forth from those sacred precincts, and boxed the ears of the unlucky 10 urchin in attendance who had dared to profane that hallowed ground.

The bath was a great comfort. For I began to be sensible of acute pains in my limbs from lying out in the fields, and was now so tired and low that I could hardly keep myself awake for five minutes together. When I had bathed, they (I mean my aunt and Janet) enrobed me in a shirt and a pair of trousers belonging to Mr. Dick, and tied me up in two or three great shawls. What sort of bundle I looked like, I don't know, but I felt a very hot one. Feeling also very faint and drowsy, I soon lay down on the sofa again and fell 20 asleep.

After tea, we sat at the window—on the look-out, as I imagined, from my aunt's sharp expression of face, for more invaders—until dusk, when Janet set candles on the table, and pulled down the blinds.

"Now, Mr. Dick," said my aunt, with her grave look, and her forefinger up as before, "I am going to ask you another question. Look at this child."

"David's son ?" said Mr. Dick, with an attentive, puzzled face.

"Exactly so," returned my aunt. "What would you do with him now ?"

"Do with David's son ?" said Mr. Dick.

"Ay," replied my aunt, "with David's son."

"Oh !" said Mr. Dick. "Yes. Do with—I should put him to bed."

"Janet!" cried my aunt, with the same complacent triumph that I had remarked before. "Mr. Dick sets us all right. If the bed is ready, we'll take him up to it."

CHAPTER X

MY AUNT MAKES UP HER MIND ABOUT ME

ON going down in the morning, I found my aunt musing so profoundly over the breakfast-table, with her elbow on the tray, that the contents of the urn had overflowed the teapot and were laying the whole table-cloth under water, when my entrance put her meditations to flight. I felt sure that I had been the subject of her reflections, and was 10 more than ever anxious to know her intentions towards me. Yet I dared not express my anxiety, lest it should give her offence.

"Hollo!" said my aunt, after a long time.

I looked up and met her sharp, bright glance respectfully.

"I have written to him," said my aunt.

"To——?"

"To your father-in-law," said my aunt. "I have sent him a letter that I'll trouble him to attend to, or he and I will fall out, I can tell him!"

20 "Does he know where I am, aunt?" I inquired, alarmed.

"I have told him," said my aunt, with a nod.

"Shall I—be—given up to him?" I faltered.

"I don't know," said my aunt. "We shall see."

"Oh! I can't think what I shall do." I exclaimed, "if I have to go back to Mr. Murdstone!"

"I don't know anything about it," said my aunt, shaking her head. "I can't say, I am sure. We shall see."

My spirits sank under these words, and I became very downcast and heavy of heart.

30 The anxiety I underwent in the interval which necessarily

elapsed before the reply could be received to her letter to Mr. Murdstone, was extreme; but I made an endeavour to suppress it, and to be as agreeable as I could in a quiet way, both to my aunt and Mr. Dick. At length the reply from Mr. Murdstone came, and my aunt informed me, to my infinite terror, that he was coming to speak to her himself on the next day. On the next day, still bundled up in my curious habiliments, I sat counting the time, and waiting to be startled by the sight of the gloomy face, whose non-arrival startled me every minute. 10

Our dinner had been indefinitely postponed; but it was growing so late, that my aunt had ordered it to be got ready, when she gave a sudden alarm of donkeys, and to my consternation and amazement, I beheld Miss Murdstone, on a side-saddle, ride deliberately over the sacred piece of green, and stop in front of the house, looking about her.

My aunt was so exasperated by the coolness with which Miss Murdstone looked about her, that I really believe she was motionless, and unable for the moment to dart out according to custom. I seized the opportunity to inform her 20 who it was; and that the gentleman now coming near the offender (for the way up was very steep, and he had dropped behind), was Mr. Murdstone himself.

"I don't care who it is!" cried my aunt, still shaking her head. "I won't be trespassed upon. I won't allow it. Go away! Janet, turn him round. Lead him off!"

Miss Murdstone had dismounted, and was now waiting with her brother at the bottom of the steps, until my aunt should be at leisure to receive them.

"Shall I go away, aunt?" I asked, trembling. 30

"No, sir," said my aunt. "Certainly not!" With which she pushed me into a corner near her, and fenced me in with a chair, as if it were a prison or a bar of justice. This position I continued to occupy during the whole interview, and from it I saw now Mr. and Miss Murdstone enter the room.

"Oh!" said my aunt, "I was not aware at first to whom

I had the pleasure of objecting. But I don't allow anybody to ride over that turf. I make no exceptions."

Mr. Murdstone seemed afraid, and interposing began—

"Miss Trotwood!"

"You'll excuse me saying, sir," returned my aunt, "that I think it would have been a much better and happier thing if you had left that poor child alone. Janet," ringing the bell, "my compliments to Mr. Dick, and beg him to come down."

- 10 When he came, my aunt performed the ceremony of introduction.

"Mr. Dick. An old and intimate friend. On whose judgment I rely."

"Miss Trotwood," Mr. Murdstone went on, "on the receipt of your letter, I considered it an act of greater justice to myself, and perhaps of more respect to you, to answer it in person, however inconvenient the journey, rather than by letter. Th's unhappy boy, Miss Trotwood, has been the occasion of much domestic trouble and uneasiness; both during the lifetime of my late dear wife, and since. He has a sullen, rebellious spirit; a violent temper; and an untoward, intractable disposition."

"Ha!" said my aunt. "Well, sir?"

"Miss Trotwood," he returned, "I am here to take David back—to take him back unconditionally, to dispose of him as I think proper, and to deal with him as I think right. I am here, for the first and last time, to take him away. Is he ready to go? If he is not—and you tell me he is not; on any pretence; it is indifferent to me what—my doors are 30 shut against him henceforth, and yours, I take it for granted, are open to him."

"And what does the boy say?" said my aunt. "Are you ready to go, David?"

I answered no, and entreated her not to let me go. I begged and prayed my aunt to befriend and protect me, for my father's sake.



THE MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW.

[*Face page 61.*

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "what shall I do with this child?"

Mr. Dick considered, hesitated, brightened, and rejoined, "Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly."

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, triumphantly, "give me your hand, for your common sense is invaluable." Having shaken it with great cordiality, she pulled me towards her, and said to Mr. Murdstone—

"You can go when you like; I'll take my chance with the boy. If he's all you say he is, at least I can do as much for him then, as you have done. But I don't believe a word of it. Good-day, sir! and good-bye! Good day to you, too, ma'am," said my aunt, turning suddenly upon his sister. "Let me see you ride a donkey over *my* green again, and as sure as you have a head upon your shoulders, I'll knock your bonnet off, and tread upon it!"

My aunt's face gradually relaxed, and became so pleasant, that I was emboldened to kiss and thank her; which I did with great heartiness, and with both my arms clasped round her neck. I then shook hands with Mr. Dick, who shook 20 hands with me a great many times, and hailed this happy close of the proceedings with repeated bursts of laughter.

"I have been thinking, do you know, Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "that I might call him Trotwood?"

"Certainly, certainly. Call him Trotwood, certainly," said Mr. Dick.

"Trotwood Copperfield, you mean," returned my aunt.

"Yes, to be sure. Yes. Trotwood Copperfield," said Mr. Dick, a little abashed.

My aunt took so kindly to the notion, that some ready- 30 made clothes, which were purchased for me that afternoon, were marked "Trotwood Copperfield," in her own handwriting, and in indelible marking ink, before I put them on; and it was settled that all the other clothes which were ordered to be made for me should be marked in the same way.

Thus I began my new life, in a new name, and with everything new about me.

CHAPTER XI

I MAKE ANOTHER BEGINNING

MR. DICK and I soon became the best of friends. While I advanced in friendship and intimacy with him I did not go backward in the favour of his staunch friend, my aunt. She took so kindly to me, that, in the course of a few weeks, she shortened my adopted name of Trotwood into Trot; and even encouraged me to hope that if I went on as I had begun, I might take equal rank in her affections with my
10 sister Betsey Trotwood.

"Trot," said my aunt one evening, "we must not forget your education."

This was my only subject of anxiety, and I felt quite delighted by her referring to it.

"Should you like to go to school at Canterbury?" said my aunt.

I replied that I should like it very much, as it was so near her.

"Good," said my aunt. "Should you like to go to-morrow?"

Being already no stranger to the general rapidity of my aunt's evolutions, I was not surprised by the suddenness of the proposal, and said, "Yes."

"Good," said my aunt again. "Janet, hire the gray pony and chaise to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and pack up Master Trotwood's clothes to-night."

Next morning, my aunt, who was perfectly indifferent to public opinion, drove the gray pony through Dover in a masterly manner; sitting high and stiff like a state coachman, keeping a steady eye upon him wherever he went,

and making a point of not letting him have his own way in any respect. When we came into the country road, she permitted him to relax a little, however; and looking at me down in a valley of cushion by her side, asked me whether I was happy.

"Very happy indeed, thank you, aunt," I said.

She was much gratified; and both her hands being occupied, patted me on the head with her whip.

"Is it a large school, aunt?" I asked.

"Why, I don't know," said my aunt. "We are going to 10 Mr. Wickfield's first."

"Does he keep a school?" I asked.

"No, Trot," said my aunt. "He keeps an office."

I asked for no more information about Mr. Wickfield, as she offered none, and we conversed on other subjects until we came to Canterbury.

We stopped before a very old house bulging out over the road. When the pony-chaise stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the house, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor (in a little 20 round tower that formed one side of the house), and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It belonged to a red-haired person—a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older—whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows, and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown; so unsheltered and unshaded, that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neckcloth; buttoned up to the throat; and had a long, lank, 30 skeleton hand, which particularly attracted my attention as he stood at the pony's head, rubbing his chin with it, and looking up at us in the chaise.

"Is Mr. Wickfield at home, Uriah Heep?" said my aunt.

"Mr. Wickfield's at home, ma'am." said Uriah Heep, "if

you'll please to walk in there," pointing with his long hand to the room he meant.

We got out ; and leaving him to hold the pony, went into a long low parlour looking towards the street. A door at the farther end of the room opening, a gentleman entered.

" Miss Betsey Trotwood," said the gentleman, " pray walk in. I was engaged for the moment, but you'll excuse my being busy."

Miss Betsey thanked him, and we went into his room, 10 which was furnished as an office, with books, papers, tin boxes, and so forth.

" Well, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield ; for I soon found that it was he, and that he was a lawyer, and steward of the estates of a rich gentleman of the county ; " what wind blows you here ? Not an ill wind, I hope ? "

" No," replied my aunt, " I have not come for any law."

" That's right, ma'am," said Mr. Wickfield. " You had better come for anything else."

His hair was quite white now, though his eyebrows were 20 still black. He had a very agreeable face, and, I thought, was handsome. He was very cleanly dressed, in a blue coat, striped waistcoat, and nankeen trousers ; and his fine frilled shirt and cambric neckcloth looked unusually soft and white.

" This is my nephew," said my aunt.

" Wasn't aware you had one, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield.

" My grand-nephew, that is to say," observed my aunt.

" Wasn't aware you had a grand-nephew, I give you my word," said Mr. Wickfield.

30 " I have adopted him," said my aunt, with a wave of her hand, importing that his knowledge and his ignorance were all one to her, " and I have brought him here, to put him to a school where he may be thoroughly well taught, and well treated. Now tell me where that school is, and what it is, and all about it."

" The best school ? You want the best ? "

My aunt nodded assent.

"At the best we have," said Mr. Wickfield, considering, "your nephew couldn't board just now."

"But he could board somewhere else, I suppose?" suggested my aunt.

Mr. Wickfield thought I could. After a little discussion, he proposed to take my aunt to the school, that she might see it and judge for herself; also, to take her, with the same object, to two or three houses where he thought I could be boarded. My aunt embracing the proposal, we were all three going out together, when he stopped and said—

"Our little friend here might have some motive, perhaps, for objecting to the arrangements. I think we had better leave him behind?"

My aunt seemed disposed to contest the point; but to facilitate matters I said I would gladly remain behind, if they pleased; and returned into Mr. Wickfield's office, where I sat down again, in the chair I had first occupied, to await their return.

At length my aunt and Mr. Wickfield came back, after a pretty long absence. They were not so successful as I could have wished; for though the advantages of the school were undeniable, my aunt had not approved of any of the boarding houses proposed for me.

"It's very unfortunate," said my aunt. "I don't know what to do, Trot."

"It *does* happen unfortunately," said Mr. Wickfield. "But I'll tell you what you can do, Miss Trotwood."

"What's that?" inquired my aunt.

"Leave your nephew here, for the present. He's a quiet fellow. He won't disturb me at all. It's a capital house for study. As quiet as a monastery, and almost as roomy. Leave him here."

My aunt evidently liked the offer, though she was delicate of accepting it. So did I.

"Come, Miss Trotwood," said Mr. Wickfield. "This is

the way out of the difficulty. It's only a temporary arrangement, you know. If it don't act well, or don't quite accord with our mutual convenience, he can easily go to the right about. There will be time to find some better place for him in the meanwhile. You had better determine to leave him here for the present ! ”

“ I am very much obliged to you,” said my aunt ; “ and so is he, I see ; but—— ”

“ Come ! I know what you mean,” cried Mr. Wickfield.
10 “ You shall not be oppressed by the receipt of favours, Miss Trotwood. You may pay for him if you like. We won’t be hard about terms, but you shall pay if you will.”

“ On that understanding,” said my aunt, “ though it doesn’t lessen the real obligation, I shall be very glad to leave him.”

“ Then come and see my little housekeeper,” said Mr. Wickfield.

Mr. Wickfield tapped at a door in a corner of the panelled wall, and a girl of about my own age came quickly out and
20 kissed him. Although her face was quite bright and happy, there was a tranquillity about it, and about her—a quiet, good, calm spirit—that I never have forgotten ; that I never shall forget.

This was his little housekeeper, his daughter Agnes, Mr. Wickfield said. She listened to her father, as he told her about me, with a pleasant face ; and when he had concluded, proposed to my aunt, that we should go upstairs and see my room. We all went together ; she before us : and a glorious old room it was, with oak beams, and diamond panes ; and
30 the broad balustrade going all the way up to it.

My aunt was as happy as I was, in the arrangement made for me ; and we went down to the drawing-room again, well pleased and gratified. She told me that everything would be arranged for me by Mr. Wickfield, and that I should want for nothing, and gave me the kindest words and the best advice.

"Trot," said my aunt in conclusion, "be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you!"

I was greatly overcome, and could only thank her, again and again, and send my love to Mr. Dick.

"Never," said my aunt, "be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel. Avoid those three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you."

I promised, as well as I could, that I would not abuse her kindness or forget her admonition.

"The pony's at the door," said my aunt, "and I am off! 10 Stay here."

With these words she embraced me hastily, and went out of the room, shutting the door after her.

After dinner we came upstairs into the drawing-room again: in one snug corner of which Agnes set glasses for her father, and a decanter of port wine. There he sat, taking his wine, and taking a good deal of it, for two hours; while Agnes played on the piano, worked, and talked to him and me. He was, for the most part, gay and cheerful with us; but sometimes his eyes rested on her, and he fell into a brooding state, and was silent. She always observed this quickly, as I thought, and always roused him with a question or caress. Then he came out of his meditation, and drank more wine. 20

In the course of the evening I had rambled down to the door, and a little way along the street, that I might have a peep at the old houses, and the gray cathedral. As I came back, I saw Uriah Heep shutting up the office; and, feeling friendly towards everybody, went in and spoke to him, and at parting, gave him my hand. But oh, what a 30 clammy hand his was! as ghostly to the touch as to the sight! I rubbed mine afterwards, to warm it, *and to rub his off.*

It was such an uncomfortable hand, that, when I went to my room, it was still cold and wet upon my memory. Leaning out of window, and seeing one of the faces on the beam-ends

looking at me sideways, I fancied it was Uriah Heep got up there somehow, and shut him out in a hurry.

CHAPTER XII

I AM A NEW BOY IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE

NEXT morning, after breakfast, I entered on school life again. I went, accompanied by Mr. Wickfield, to the scene of my future studies—a grave building in a courtyard, with a learned air about it that seemed very well suited to the stray rooks and jackdaws who came down from the cathedral towers to walk with a clerical bearing on the grass-plot—and was introduced to my new master, Dr. Strong.

10 He was in his library, with his clothes not particularly well brushed, and his hair not particularly well combed ; his knee-smalls unbraced ; his long, black gaiters unbuttoned ; and his shoes yawning like two caverns on the hearth-rug. Turning upon me a lustreless eye, he said he was glad to see me ; and then he gave me his hand, which I didn't know what to do with, as it did nothing for itself.

The school-room was a pretty large hall, on the quietest side of the house, confronted by the stately stare of some half-dozen of the great urns, and commanding a peep of an old secluded garden belonging to the Doctor, where the peaches were ripening on the sunny south wall. About five-and-twenty boys were studiously engaged at their books when we went in, but they rose to give the Doctor good-morning, and remained standing when they saw Mr. Wickfield and me.

"A new boy, young gentlemen," said the Doctor ; "Trotwood Copperfield."

One Adams, who was the head-boy, then stepped out of his place and welcomed me. He looked like a young clergy-

man, in his white cravat, but he was very affable and good-humoured ; and he showed me my place, and presented me to the masters, in a gentlemanly way that would have put me at my ease, if anything could.

It seemed to me so long, however, since I had been among such boys, or among any companion- of my own age, except Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes, that I felt as strange as ever I have done in all my life. I was so conscious of having passed through scenes of which they could have no knowledge, and of having acquired experiences so reign to my age, appearance, and condition, as one of them, that I half believed it was an imposture to come there as an ordinary little schoolboy. What would they say, who made so light of money, if they could know how I had scraped my halfpence together, for the purchase of my daily savoy, or my slices of pudding ? How would it affect them, who were so innocent of London life, and London streets, to discover how knowing I was (and was ashamed to be) in some of the meaning phases of both ? All this ran in my head so much, on that first day at Dr. Strong's, that I felt distrustful of my slightest look and gesture ; shrunk within myself whenever I was approached by one of my new schoolfellows ; and hurried off the minute school was over, afraid of committing myself in my response to any friendly notice or advance.

But there was such an influence in Mr. Wickfield's old house, that when I knocked at it, with my new school-books under my arm, I began to feel my uneasiness softening away. As I went up to my airy old room, the grave shadow of the staircase seemed to fall upon my doubts and fears, and to make the past more indistinct. I sat there, sturdily 30 conning my books, until dinner-time (we were out of school for good at three) ; and went down, hopeful of becoming a passable sort of boy yet.

Agnes was in the drawing-room, waiting for her father, who was detained by someone in his office. She met me with her pleasant smile, and asked me how I liked the school.

I told her I should like it very much, I hoped ; but I was a little strange to it at first.

"*You have never been to school," I said, "have you ?*"

"*Oh yes ! Every day."*

"*Ah, but you mean here, at your own home ?*"

"*Papa couldn't spare me to go anywhere else," she answered, smiling and shaking her head. "His house-keeper must be in his house, you know."*

"*He is very fond of you, I am sure," I said.*

- 10 *She nodded "Yes," and went to the door to listen for his coming up, that she might meet him on the stairs.*

"*Hark ! That's papa now !*"

Her bright, calm face lighted up with pleasure as she went to meet him, and as they came in, hand in hand. He greeted me cordially ; and told me I should certainly be happy under Dr. Strong, who was one of the gentlest of men.

- "*There may be some, perhaps—I don't know that there are—who abuse his kindness," said Mr. Wickfield. "Never be one of those, Trotwood, in anything. He is the least suspicious of mankind ; and whether that's a merit, or whether it's a blemish, it deserves consideration in all dealings with the Doctor, great or small."*

When we had dined, we went upstairs again, where everything went on exactly as on the previous day. Agnes set the glasses and decanter in the same corner, and Mr. Wickfield sat down to drink, and drank a good deal. Agnes played the piano to him, sat by him, and worked and talked, and played some games of dominoes with me.

- 30 The time having come for her withdrawal for the night, and she having left us, I gave Mr. Wickfield my hand, preparatory to going away myself. But he checked me and said, "Should you like to stay with us, Trotwood, or to go elsewhere ?"

"To stay," I answered, quickly.

"That's a fine fellow !" said Mr. Wickfield. "As long as you are glad to be here, you shall stay here." He shook

hands with me upon it, and clapped me on the back ; and told me that when I had anything to do at night after Agnes had left us, or when I wished to read for my own pleasure, I was free to come down to his room, if he were there and if I desired it for company's sake, and to sit with him. I thanked him for his consideration ; and, as he went down soon afterwards, and I was not tired, went down too, with a book in my hand, to avail myself for half an hour, of his permission.

But, seeing a light in the little round office, and immediately 10 feeling myself attracted towards Uriah Heep, who had a sort of fascination for me, I went in there instead. I found Uriah reading a great fat book, with such demonstrative attention, that his lank forefinger followed up every line as he read, and made clammy tracks along the page (or so I fully believed) like a snail.

" You are working late to-night, Uriah," says I.

" Yes, Master Copperfield," says Uriah.

As I was getting on the stool opposite, to talk to him more conveniently, I observed that he had not such a thing 20 as a smile about him, and that he could only widen his mouth and make two hard creases down his cheeks, one on each side, to stand for one.

" I am not doing office-work, Master Copperfield," said Uriah.

" What work, then ? " I asked.

" I am improving my legal knowledge, Master Copperfield," said Uriah.

My stool was such a tower of observation, that as I watched him reading on again, after this rapturous exclamation, and 30 following up the lines with his forefinger, I observed that his nostrils, which were thin and pointed, with sharp dints in them, had a singular and most uncomfortable way of expanding and contracting themselves—that they seemed to twinkle, instead of his eyes, which hardly ever twinkled at all.

"I suppose you are quite a great lawyer?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

"Me, Master Copperfield?" said Uriah. "Oh, no! I'm a very umble person."

It was no fancy of mine about his hands, I observed; for he frequently ground the palms against each other as if to squeeze them dry and warm, besides often wiping them, in a stealthy way, on his pocket-handkerchief.

"I am well aware that I am the umblest person going," 10 said Uriah Heep, modestly; "let the other be where he may. My mother is likewise a very umble person. We live in a numble abode, Master Copperfield, but have much to be thankful for. My father's former calling was umble. He was a sexton."

"What is he now?" I asked.

"He is a partaker of glory at present, Master Copperfield," said Uriah Heep. "But we have much to be thankful for. How much have I to be thankful for in living with Mr. Wickfield!"

20 I asked Uriah if he had been with Mr. Wickfield long.

"I have been with him, going on four year, Master Copperfield," said Uriah; shutting up his book, after carefully marking the place where he had left off. "Since a year after my father's death. How much have I to be thankful for in that! How much have I to be thankful for in Mr. Wickfield's kind intention to give me my articles, which would otherwise not lay within the umble means of mother and self!"

"Then, when your articled time is over, you'll be a regular 30 lawyer, I suppose?" said I.

"With the blessing of Providence, Master Copperfield," returned Uriah.

"Perhaps you'll be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business, one of these days," I said, to make myself agreeable; "and it will be Wickfield & Heep, or Heep late Wickfield."

"Oh, no, Master Copperfield," returned Uriah, shaking his head, "I am much too umble for that! Mr. Wickfield is a most excellent man, Master Copperfield. If you have known him long, you know it, I am sure, much better than I can inform you."

I replied that I was certain he was; but that I had not known him long myself, though he was a friend of my aunt's.

"Oh, indeed, Master Copperfield," said Uriah. "Your aunt is a sweet lady, Master Copperfield!" 10

He had a way of writhing when he wanted to express enthusiasm, which was very ugly; and which diverted my attention from the compliment he had paid my relation, to the snaky twistings of his throat and body.

"A sweet lady, Master Copperfield!" said Uriah Heep. "She has a great admiration for Miss Agnes, Master Copperfield, I believe?"

I said "Yes," boldly; not that I knew anything about it, Heaven forgive me!

"I hope you have, too, Master Copperfield," said Uriah. 20 "But I am sure you must have."

"Everybody must have," I returned.

"Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield," said Uriah Heep, "for that remark! It is so true! Umble as I am, I know it is *so* true! Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield!"

He writhed himself quite off his stool in the excitement of his feelings, and, being off, began to make arrangements for going home.

"Mother will be expecting me," he said, referring to a pale, inexpressive-faced watch in his pocket, "and getting 30 uneasy; for though we are very umble, Master Copperfield, we are much attached to one another. If you would come and see us any afternoon, and take a cup of tea at our lowly dwelling, mother would be as proud of your company as I should be."

I said I should be glad to come.

"Thank you, Master Copperfield," returned Uriah, putting his book away upon a shelf.

So one evening David takes tea with the Heeps, when mother and son vie in their efforts to induce him to be too confidential regarding Mr. Wickfield and his habits. Micawber suddenly passes the door and is introduced by David to the Heeps.

CHAPTER XIII

I CHOOSE A PROFESSION. URIAH HEEP AGAIN

I AM doubtful whether I was at heart glad or sorry when my school-days drew to an end, and the time came for my leaving Dr. Strong's. I had been very happy there, I had a great attachment for the Doctor, and I was eminent and distinguished in that little world.

My aunt and I had held many grave deliberations on the calling to which I should be devoted. For a year or more 10 I had endeavoured to find a satisfactory answer to her often-repeated question, "What I would like to be?" But I had no particular liking, that I could discover, for anything.

"Trot, I tell you what, my dear," said my aunt, one morning in the Christmas season when I left school; "as this knotty point is still unsettled, and as we must not make a mistake in our decision if we can help it, I think we had better take a little breathing-time. In the meanwhile, you must try to look at it from a new point of view, and not as a school-boy."

20 "I will, aunt."

"It has occurred to me," pursued my aunt, "that a little change, and a glimpse of life out of doors, may be useful, in helping you to know your own mind, and form a cooler judgment. Suppose you were to take a little journey now. Suppose you were to go down into the old part of the country

again, for instance, and see that— that out-of-the-way woman with the savagest of names,” said my aunt, rubbing her nose, for she could never thoroughly forgive Peggotty for being so called.

“ Of all things in the world, aunt I should like it best ! ”

“ Well,” said my aunt, “ that’s lucky, for I should like it too. But it’s natural and rational that you should like it. And I am very well persuaded that whatever you do, Trot, will always be natural and rational.”

“ I hope so, aunt.”

10

In pursuance of my aunt’s kind scheme, I was shortly afterwards fitted out with a handsome purse of money, and a portmanteau, and tenderly dismissed upon my expedition.

David first visits the Wickfields at Canterbury, and then goes on to London where he meets Steerforth, who accompanies him to Yarmouth. He goes to see Peggotty.

Here she was, in the tiled kitchen, cooking dinner ! The moment I knocked at the door she opened it, and asked me what I pleased to want. I looked at her with a smile, but she gave me no smile in return. It must have been seven years since we had met.

“ Is Mr. Barkis at home, ma’am ? ” I said, feigning to speak roughly to her.

“ He’s at home, sir,” returned Peggotty, “ but he’s bad abed with the rheumatics.”

“ Peggotty ! ” I cried to her.

She cried, “ My darling boy ! ” and we both burst into tears, and were locked in one another’s arms.

“ Barkis will be so glad,” said Peggotty, wiping her eyes with her apron, “ that it’ll do him more good than pints of liniment. May I go and tell him you are here ? Will you come up and see him, my dear ? ”

30

Of course I would. He received me with absolute enthusiasm. He was too rheumatic to be shaken hands

with, but he begged me to shake the tassel on the top of his nightcap, which I did most cordially.

"I was willin' a long time, sir ?" said Mr. Barkis.

"A long time," said I.

"And I don't regret it," said Mr. Barkis. "Do you remember what you told me once, about her making all the apple parsties and doing all the cooking ?"

"Yes, very well," I returned.

"It was as true," said Mr. Barkis, "as turnips is. It 10 was as true," said Mr. Barkis, nodding his nightcap, which was his only means of emphasis, "as taxes is. And nothing's truer than them. I'm a very poor man, sir."

"I am sorry to hear it, Mr. Barkis."

"A very poor man, indeed I am," said Mr. Barkis.

Here his right hand came slowly and feebly from under the bedclothes, and with a purposeless uncertain grasp, took hold of a stick which was loosely tied to the side of the bed. After some poking about with this instrument, Mr. Barkis poked it against a box, an end of which had been visible to 20 me all the time. Then his face became composed.

"Old clothes," said Mr. Barkis.

"Oh !" said I.

"I wish it was Money, sir," said Mr. Barkis.

"I wish it was, indeed," said I.

"But it AIN'T," said Mr. Barkis, opening both his eyes, as wide as he possibly could.

I expressed myself quite sure of that, and Mr. Barkis, turning his eyes more gently to his wife, said—

"She's the usefulest and best of women, C. P. Barkis. 30 All the praise that anyone can give to C. P. Barkis, she deserves, and more ! My dear, you'll get a dinner to-day, for company ; something good to eat and drink, will you ?"

I should have protested against this unneccssary demonstration in my honour, but that I saw Peggotty, on the opposite side of the bed, extremely anxious I should not. So I held my peace.

"I have got a trifle of money somewhere about me, my dear," said Mr. Barkis, "but I'm a little tired. If you and Mr. David will leave me for a short nap, I'll try and find it when I wake."

We left the room, in compliance with this request. When we got outside the door, Peggott informed me that Mr. Barkis, being now "a little nearer" than he used to be, always resorted to this same device before producing a single coin from his store; and that he endured unheard-of agonies in crawling out of bed alone, and taking it from that unlucky 10 box. He groaned on, until he had gone into bed again, suffering, I have no doubt, a martyrdom; and then called us in, pretending to have just woken up from a refreshing sleep, and to produce a guinea from under his pillow.

David and Steerforth go to Mr. Peggotty's boat, where they witness the betrothal of Ham and Little Em'ly. While David revisits his native place, Steerforth makes himself agreeable with Yarmouth fishersfolk.

On his return to London, David meets his aunt, whom he accompanies to the office of her proctors, Messrs. Spenlow & Jorkins. He agrees to enter their services for a month on trial, and chambers are taken for him in the Adelphi.

In response to an invitation David goes to see Agnes, then on a visit to London, who warns him against the influence of Steerforth.

Then she asked me if I had seen Uriah.

"Uriah Heep?" said I. "No. Is he in London?"

"He comes to the office downstairs, every day," returned Agnes. "He was in London a week before me. I am afraid on disagreeable business, Trotwood."

"On some business that makes you uneasy, Agnes, I see," 20 said I. "What can that be?"

Agnes laid aside her work, and replied, folding her hands upon one another, and looking pensively at me out of those beautiful soft eyes of hers—

"I believe he is going to enter into partnership with papa."

"What? Uriah? That mean, fawning fellow, worm himself into such promotion?" I cried, indignantly. "Have you made no remonstrance about it, Agnes? Consider what a connection it is likely to be. You must speak out. You must not allow your father to take such a mad step. You must prevent it, Agnes, while there's time."

"Uriah," she replied, after a moment's hesitation, "has made himself indispensable to papa. He is subtle and 10 watchful. He has mastered papa's weaknesses, fostered them, and taken advantage of them, until—to say all that I mean in a word, Trotwood, until papa is afraid of him. His ascendancy over papa is very great. He professes humility and gratitude—with truth, perhaps: I hope so—but his position is really one of power, and I fear he makes a hard use of his power."

I said he was a hound, which, at the moment, was a great satisfaction to me.

"We are not likely to remain alone much longer," said 20 Agnes, "and while I have an opportunity, let me earnestly entreat you, Trotwood, to be friendly to Uriah. Don't repel him. Don't resent (as I think you have a general disposition to do) what may be uncongenial to you in him. He may not deserve it, for we know no certain ill of him. In any case, think first of papa and me!"

Among the guests at dinner that evening is Uriah, who returns with David to his chambers, where he is asked to spend the night.

It made me very uncomfortable to have him for a guest, for I was young then, and unused to disguise what I so strongly felt.

"You have heard something, I des-say, of a change in 30 my expectations, Master Copperfield—I should say, Mister Copperfield?" observed Uriah.

"Yes," said I, "something."

"What a prophet you have shovv yourself, Mister Copperfield!" pursued Uriah. "Dear me, what a prophet you have proved yourself to be! Don't you remember saying to me once, that perhaps I should be a p·rtner in Mr. Wickfield's business, and perhaps it might be 'Wickfield & Heep! You may not recollect it; but when a person is umble, Master Copperfield, a person treasures such things up!"

"I recollect talking about it," said I, "though I certainly did not think it very likely then."

"Oh! who would have thought it likely, Mister Copperfield!" returned Uriah, enthusiasmtically, "I am sure I didn't myself. I recollect saying vith my own lips that I was much too umble. So I considered myself really and truly."

He sat, with that carved grin on his face, looking at the fire, as I looked at him.

"But the umblest persons, Master Copperfield," he presently resumed, "may be the instruments of good. I am glad to think I have been the instrument of good to Mr. Wickfield, and that I may be more so. Oh, what a worthy man he is, 20 Mister Copperfield, but how imprudent he has been!"

"I am sorry to hear it," said I.

"Oh! Yes, truly," said Uriah. "Ah! Great imprudence, Master Copperfield. It's a topic that I wouldn't touch upon, to any soul but you. Even to you I can only touch upon it, and no more. If anyone else had been in my place during the last few years, by this time he would have had Mr. Wickfield (oh, what a worthy man he is, Master Copperfield, too!) under his thumb. Un—der—his thumb," said Uriah, very slowly, as he stretched out his cruel-looking 30 hand above my table, and pressed his own thumb down upon it, until it shook, and shook the room.

I recollect well how indignantly my heart beat, as I saw his crafty face, with the appropriately red light of the fire upon it, preparing for something else.

"Master Copperfield," he began, "you will not think the

worse of my umbleness, if I make a little confidence to you, Master Copperfield. Will you ? ”

“ Oh no,” said I, with an effort.

“ Thank you ! ” He took out his pocket-handkerchief, and began wiping the palms of his hands. “ Miss Agnes, Master Copperfield — ”

“ Well, Uriah ? ”

“ Umble as I am,” he wiped his hands harder, and looked at them and at the fire by turns, “ umble as my mother is, 10 and lowly as our poor but honest roof has ever been, the image of Miss Agnes has been in my breast for years. Oh, Master Copperfield, with what a pure affection do I love the ground my Agnes walks on ! ”

I asked him, with a better appearance of composure than I could have thought possible a minute before, whether he had made his feelings known to Agnes.

“ Oh, no, Master Copperfield ! ” he returned ; “ oh dear, no ! Not to anyone but you. You see I am only just emerging from my lowly station. I rest a good deal of hope 20 on her observing how useful I am to her father (for I trust to be very useful to him, indeed, Master Copperfield), and how I smooth the way for him, and keep him straight. She’s so much attached to her father, Master Copperfield (oh, what a lovely thing it is in a daughter !), that I think she may come, on his account, to be kind to me.”

I fathomed the depth of the rascal’s whole scheme, and understood why he laid it bare.

Dear Agnes ! So much too loving and too good for anyone that I could think of, was it possible that she was reserved 30 to be the wife of such a wretch as this !

When I saw him going downstairs early in the morning (for, thank Heaven ! he would not stay to breakfast), it appeared to me as if the night was going away in his person. When I went out to the Commons, I charged my landlady with particular directions to leave the windows open, that my sitting-room might be aired, and purged of his presence.

CHAPTER XLV

I FALL INTO CAPTIVITY. I VISIT TRADDLES

DAYS and weeks slipped away. I was articled to Spenlow & Jorkins. I had ninety pounds a year (exclusive of my house-rent and sundry collateral matters) from my aunt. My rooms were engaged for twelve months certain : and though I still found them dreary on an evening, and the evenings long, I could settle down into a state of equable low spirits, and resign myself to coffee ; which I seem, on looking back, to have taken by the gallon at about this period of my existence.

Mr. Spenlow remarked that he should have been happy to 10 have seen me at his house at Norwood to celebrate our becoming connected, but for his domestic arrangements being in some disorder, on account of the expected return of his daughter from finishing her education at Paris. But, he intimated that when she came home he should hope to have the pleasure of entertaining me. I knew that he was a widower with one daughter, and expressed my acknowledgements.

Mr. Spenlow was as good as his word. In a week or two, he referred to this engagement, and said, that if I would do 20 him the favour to come down next Saturday, and stay till Monday, he would be extremely happy. Of course I said I would do him the favour ; and he was to drive me down in his phaeton, and to bring me back.

We were very pleasant, going down, and Mr. Spenlow gave me some hints in reference to my profession.

We went into the house, which was cheerfully lighted up. We turned into a room near at hand, and I heard a voice say, "Mr. Copperfield, my daughter Dora, and my daughter Dora's confidential friend !" It was, no doubt, Mr. Spenlow's voice, but I didn't know it, and I didn't care whose

it was. All was over in a moment. I had fulfilled my destiny. I was a captive and a slave. I loved Dora Spenlow to distraction !

" *I*," observed a well-remembered voice, when I had bowed and murmured something, " have seen Mr. Copperfield before."

The speaker was not Dora. No ; the confidential friend, Miss Murdstone !

" Miss Murdstone has had the goodness," said Mr. Spenlow 10 to me, " to accept the office—if I may so describe it—of my daughter Dora's confidential friend. My daughter Dora having, unhappily, no mother, Miss Murdstone is obliging enough to become her companion and protector."

I don't remember who was there, except Dora. I have not the least idea what we had for dinner, besides Dora. My impression is, that I dined off Dora, entirely, and sent away half a dozen plates untouched. I sat next to her. I talked to her. She had the most delightful little voice, the gayest little laugh, the pleasantest and most fascinating 20 little ways, that ever led a lost youth into hopeless slavery. She was rather diminutive altogether. So much the more precious, I thought.

All I know of the rest of the evening is, that I heard the empress of my heart sing enchanted ballads in the French language, generally to the effect that, whatever was the matter, we ought always to dance, Ta ra la, Ta ra la ! accompanying herself on a glorified instrument, resembling a guitar.

Next morning we went to church. Miss Murdstone was 30 between Dora and me in the pew ; but I heard her sing, and the congregation vanished. A sermon was delivered—about Dora, of course—and I am afraid that is all I know of the service.

We had a quiet day. No company, a walk, a family dinner of four, and an evening of looking over books and pictures. Ah ! little did Mr. Spenlow imagine, when he

sat opposite to me after dinner that day, with his pocket-handkerchief over his head, how fervently I was embracing him, in my fancy, as his son-in-law Little did he think, when I took leave of him at night, hat he had just given his full consent to my being engaged to Dora, and that I was invoking blessings on his head !

We departed early in the morning, for we had a Salvage case coming on in the Admiralty Court. Dora was at the breakfast table to make the tea again however ; and I had the melancholy pleasure of taking off my hat to her in the 10 phaeton, as she stood on the door-step

It came into my head, next day, to go and look after Traddles. He lived in a little street, near the Veterinary College at Camden Town, which was principally tenanted, as one of our clerks who lived in that direction informed me, by gentlemen students, who bought live donkeys, and made experiments on those quadrupeds in their private apartments.

I found that the street was not as desirable a one as I could have wished it to be, for the sake of Traddles. The general 20 air of the place reminded me forcibly of the days when I lived with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. An indescribable character of faded gentility that attached to the house I sought, and made it unlike all the other houses in the street—though they were all built on one monotonous pattern, and looked like the early copies of a blundering boy who was learning to make houses, and had not yet got out of his cramped brick-and-mortar pothooks—reminded me still more of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber.

“ Does Mr. Traddles live here ? ” I inquired.

30

A mysterious voice from the end of the passage replied “ Yes.”

“ Is he at home ? ” said I.

Again the mysterious voice replied in the affirmative. Upon this, I walked in, and in pursuance of the servant’s directions walked upstairs ; conscious, as I passed the back

parlour-door, that I was surveyed by a mysterious eye, probably belonging to the mysterious voice.

When I got to the top of the stairs—the house was only a storey high above the ground floor—Traddles was on the landing to meet me. He was delighted to see me, and gave me welcome, with great heartiness, to his little room.

"Traddles," said I, shaking hands with him again, after I had sat down. "I am delighted to see you."

"I am delighted to see *you*, Copperfield," he returned.

10 "You are reading for the bar?" said I.

"Why, yes," said Traddles, rubbing his hands, slowly over one another, "I am reading for the bar. The fact is, I have just begun to keep my terms, after rather a long delay. It's some time since I was articled, but the payment of that hundred pounds was a great pull. A great pull!" said Traddles, with a wince, as if he had had a tooth out.

"In the meantime," continued Traddles, "I don't make much, but I don't spend much. In general, I board with the people downstairs, who are very agreeable people indeed.

20 Both Mr. and Mrs. Micawber have seen a good deal of life, and are excellent company."

"My dear Traddles!" I quickly exclaimed. "Mr. and Mrs. Micawber! Why, I am intimately acquainted with them!"

An opportune double knock at the door, which I knew well from old experience, resolved any doubt in my mind as to their being my old friends. I begged Traddles to ask his landlord to walk up. Traddles accordingly did so, over the banister; and Mr. Micawber, not a bit changed—his 30 tights, his stick, his shirt-collar, and his eye-glass, all the same as ever—came into the room with a genteel and youthful air.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Traddles," said Mr. Micawber, with the old roll in his voice, as he checked himself in humming a soft tune. "I was not aware that there was any individual, alien to this tenement, in your sanctum."

Mr. Micawber slightly bowed to me, and pulled up his shirt-collar.

"How do you do, Mr. Micawber?" said I.

"Sir," said Mr. Micawber, "you are exceedingly obliging. I am *in statu quo*."

"And Mrs. Micawber?" I pursued.

"Sir," said Mr. Micawber, "she is also, thank God, *in statu quo*."

"And the children, Mr. Micawber?"

"Sir," said Mr. Micawber, "I rejoice to reply that they are, likewise, in the enjoyment of salubrity."

All this time, Mr. Micawber had not known me in the least, though he had stood face to face with me. But, now, seeing me smile, he examined my features with more attention, fell back, cried, "Is it possible? Have I the pleasure of again beholding Copperfield?" and shook me by both hands with the utmost fervour.

"Good Heaven, Mr. Traddles!" said Mr. Micawber, "to think that I should find you acquainted with the friend of my youth, the companion of earlier days! My dear!" calling over the banisters to Mrs. Micawber, while Traddles looked (with reason) not a little amazed at this description of me. "Here is a gentleman in Mr. Traddles's apartment, whom he wishes to have the pleasure of presenting to you!"

I was expressing my satisfaction, when Mrs. Micawber came in; a little more slatternly than she used to be, or so she seemed now, to my unaccustomed eyes, but still with some preparation of herself for company, and with a pair of brown gloves on.

30

"My dear," said Mr. Micawber, leading her towards me. "Here is a gentleman of the name of Copperfield, who wishes to renew his acquaintance with you."

We had half an hour's talk, all together; and I told Traddles, and Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, that before I could think of leaving, they must appoint a day when they would

come and dine with me. An appointment was made for the purpose, that suited us all, and then I took my leave.

Mr. Micawber, under pretence of showing me a nearer way than that by which I had come, accompanied me to the corner of the street ; being anxious (he explained to me) to say a few words to an old friend, in confidence.

"My dear Copperfield," said Mr. Micawber, "I am at present engaged in the sale of corn upon commission. It is not an avocation of a remunerative description—in other words it does *not* pay—and some temporary embarrassments of a pecuniary nature have been the consequence. I am, however, delighted to add that I have now an immediate prospect of something turning up (I am not at liberty to say in what direction), which I trust will enable me to provide, permanently, both for myself and for your friend Traddles, in whom I have an unaffected interest."

Mr. Micawber then shook hands with me again, and left me.

The dinner was an unqualified success. Immediately following it, Steerforth brings David a letter from Peggotty informing him of the critical condition of Barkis. David parts with Steerforth who asks him, if anything should ever separate them, to think of him at his best.

CHAPTER XV

A LOSS

I GOT down to Yarmouth in the evening, and went to the inn. I knew that Peggotty's spare room—my room—was likely to have occupation enough in a little while, if that great Visitor, before whose presence all the living must give place, were not already in the house ; so I betook myself to the inn, and dined there, and engaged my bed.

It was ten o'clock when I went out.

My low tap at the door was answered by Mr. Peggotty. He was not so much surprised to see me as I had expected.

Peggotty came down, took me in her arms, and blessed and thanked me over and over again for being such a comfort to her (that was what she said) in her distress. She then entreated me to come upstairs, sobbing that Mr. Barkis had always liked me and admired me ; that he had often talked of me, before he fell into a stupor ; and that she believed, in case of his coming to himself again, he would brighten up at sight of me, if he could brighten up at any earthly thing. 10

The probability of his ever doing so, appeared to me, when I saw him, to be very small. He was lying with his head and shoulders out of bed, in an uncomfortable attitude, half-resting on the box which had cost him so much pain and trouble. I learned, that, when he was past creeping out of bed to open it, and past assuring himself of its safety by means of the divining rod I had seen him use, he had required to have it placed on the chair at the bedside, where he had ever since embraced it, night and day. His arm lay on it now. Time and the world were slipping from beneath him, but the box was there ; and the last words he had uttered were (in an explanatory tone) "Old clothes ! "

"Barkis, my dear !" said Peggotty, almost cheerfully, bending over him, while her brother and I stood at the bed's foot. "Here's my dear boy—my dear boy, Master Davy, who brought us together, Barkis ! That you sent messages by, you know ! Won't you speak to Master Davy ? "

He was as mute and senseless as the box, from which his form derived the only expression it had.

"He's a-going out with the tide," said Mr. Peggotty to 30 me, behind his hand.

My eyes were dim, and so were Mr. Peggotty's ; but I repeated in a whisper, "With the tide ? "

"People can't die, along the coast," said Mr. Peggotty, "except when the tide's pretty nigh out. They can't be born, unless it's pretty nigh in—not properly born, till flood.

He's a-going out with the tide. It's ebb at half-arter three, slack water half an hour. If he lives 'till it turns, he'll hold his own till past the flood, and go out with the next tide."

We remained there, watching him, a long time—hours. What mysterious influence my presence had upon him in that state of his senses, I shall not pretend to say; but when he at last began to wander feebly, it is certain he was muttering about driving me to school.

"He's coming to himself," said Peggotty.

- 10 Mr. Peggotty touched me, and whispered with much awe and reverence, "They are both a-going out fast."

"Barkis, my dear!" said Peggotty.

"C. P. Barkis," he cried, faintly. "No better woman anywhere!"

"Look! Here's Master Davy!" said Peggotty. For he now opened his eyes.

I was on the point of asking him if he knew me, when he tried to stretch out his arm, and said to me, distinctly, with a pleasant smile—

- 20 "Barkis is willin'!"

And, it being low water, he went out with the tide.

On the day after Mr. Barkis's funeral, Ham calls David out of the boat-house and tells him Em'ly has run away with Steerforth. Mr. Peggotty determines to seek his niece and bring her home again, leaving as his last words for her, "My unchanged love is with my darling child, and I forgive her."

CHAPTER XVI

BLISSFUL

ALL this time, I had gone on loving Dora, harder than ever. If I may so express it, I was steeped in Dora. I was not merely over head and ears in love with her, but I was saturated through and through.

My love was so much on my mind, and it was so natural to me to confide in Peggotty, that I imparted to her, in a sufficiently roundabout way, my great secret. Peggotty was strongly interested, but I could not get her into my view of the case at all. She was adroitly prejudiced in my favour, and quite unable to understand why I should have any misgivings, or be low-spirited about it. "The young lady might think herself well off," she observed, "to have such a beau. And as to her Pa," she said, "what did the gentleman expect, for gracious sake!"

10

It came about that Mr. Spenlow told me this day week was Dora's birthday, and he would be glad if I would come down and join a little picnic on the occasion.

At six in the morning, I was in Covent Garden Market, buying a bouquet for Dora. At ten I was on horseback (I hired a gallant gray, for the occasion), with the bouquet in my hat, to keep it fresh, trotting down to Norwood.

When I did find the house, and did dismount at the garden gate, and drag those stony-hearted boots across the lawn to Dora sitting on a garden seat under a lilac tree, what a 20 spectacle she was, upon that beautiful morning, among the butterflies!

There was a young lady with her—comparatively stricken in years—almost twenty, I should say. Her name was Miss Mills, and Dora called her Julia. She was the bosom friend of Dora. Happy Miss Mills!

I presented my bouquet.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Copperfield! What dear flowers!" said Dora.

But now Mr. Spenlow came out of the house, and Dora went to him, saying, "Look, papa, what beautiful flowers!" And we all walked from the lawn towards the carriage, which was getting ready.

I shall never have such a ride again. I have never had such another. There were only those three in the phaeton; and, of course, the phaeton was open; and I rode behind it,

and Dora sat with her back to the horses, looking towards me.

I don't know how long we were going, and to this hour I know as little where we went. Perhaps it was near Guildford.

I was happier than ever when the party broke up, and the other people went their several ways, and we went ours through the still evening and the dying light, with sweet scents rising up around us.

10 "Mr. Copperfield," said Miss Mills, "come to this side of the carriage a moment—if you can spare a moment. I want to speak to you."

Behold me, on my gallant gray, bending at the side of Miss Mills, with my hand upon the carriage-door!

"Dora is coming to stay with me. She is coming home with me the day after to-morrow. If you would like to call, I am sure papa would be happy to see you."

What could I do but invoke a silent blessing on Miss Mills's head, and store Miss Mills's address in the securest 20 corner of my memory!

Then Miss Mills benignantly dismissed me, saying, "Go back to Dora!" and I went; and Dora leaned out of the carriage to talk to me, and we talked all the rest of the way.

When I awoke next morning, I was resolute to declare my passion to Dora, and know my fate. At last, arrayed for the purpose at a vast expense, I went to Miss Mills's, fraught with a declaration.

Mr. Mills was not at home. I did not expect he would be. Nobody wanted *him*. Miss Mills was at home. Miss 30 Mills would do. I was shown into a room upstairs, where Miss Mills and Dora were.

Miss Mills was very glad to see me, and very sorry her Papa was not at home: though I thought we all bore that with fortitude. Miss Mills was conversational for a few minutes, and then left the room.

I began to think I would put it off till to-morrow.

"I hope your poor horse was not tired, when he got home at night," said Dora, lifting up her beautiful eyes. "It was a long way for him."

I began to think I would do it to lay.

"It was a long way for *him*," said I, "for *he* had nothing to uphold him on the journey."

"Wasn't he fed, poor thing?" asked Dora.

I began to think I would put it off till to-morrow.

"Ye—yes," I said, "he was well taken care of. I mean he had not the unutterable happiness that I had in being so 10 near you."

I don't know how I did it. I did it in a moment. I had Dora in my arms. I was full of eloquence. I never stopped for a word. I told her how I loved her.

It was off my mind. I was in a state of perfect rapture. Dora and I were engaged.

I suppose we had some notion that this was to end in marriage. We must have had some, because Dora stipulated that we were never to be married without her papa's consent. We were to keep our secret from Mr. Spenlow; 20 but I am sure the idea never entered my head, then, that there was anything dishonourable in that.

What an idle time! What an unsubstantial, happy, foolish time! Of all the times of mine that Time has in his grip, there is none that in one retrospection I can smile at half so much, and think of half so tenderly.

CHAPTER XVII

DEPRESSION

Miss Trotwood with Mr. Dick comes to the Adelphi to tell David she has lost all her money and is ruined. David tries to cancel his articles and to secure the return of his aunt's

thousand pounds' premium paid for him; but Mr. Spenlow will not permit such an unprofessional course. In despair, on his way home he meets Agnes.

"AGNES!" I joyfully exclaimed. "Oh, my dear Agnes, of all the people in the world, what a pleasure to see you!"

"Is it, indeed?" she said, in her cordial voice.

"I want to talk to you so much!" said I. "It's such a lightening of my heart, only to look at you! If I had had a conjurer's cap, there is no one I should have wished for but you!"

"What?" returned Agnes.

"Well! perhaps Dora, first," I admitted, with a blush.

10 "Certainly, Dora first, I hope," said Agnes, laughing.

"But you next," said I. "Where are you going?"

She was going to my rooms to see my aunt. She took my arm, and we walked on together. How different I felt in one short minute, having Agnes at my side!

She was not alone, she said. Her papa was with her—and Uriah Heep.

"And now they are partners," said I. "Confound him!"

20 "Yes," said Agnes. "They have some business here; and I took advantage of their coming, to come too. You must not think my visit all friendly and disinterested, Trotwood, for—I am afraid I may be cruelly prejudiced—I do not like to let papa go away alone, with him."

"Does he exercise the same influence over Mr. Wickfield still, Agnes?"

Agnes shook her head. "There is such a change at home," said she, "that you would scarcely know the dear old house. They live with us now."

"They?" said I.

30 "Mr. Heep and his mother. He sleeps in your old room," said Agnes, looking up into my face.

"I wish I had the ordering of his dreams," said I. "He wouldn't sleep there long."

We found my aunt alone. We began to talk about her losses, and I told them what I had tried to do that morning.

"Which was injudicious, Trot," said my aunt, "but well meant. You are a generous boy and I am proud of you, my dear. So far, so good. Now, Trot and Agnes, let us look the case of Betsey Trotwood in the face, and see how it stands."

I observed Agnes turn pale, as she looked very attentively at my aunt. My aunt, patting her cat, looked very attentively at Agnes.

"Betsey Trotwood," said my aunt (who had always kept her money matters to herself)—"I don't mean your sister, Trot, my dear, but myself--had a certain property. It don't matter how much; enough to live on. More; for she had saved a little, and added to it. Betsey funded her property for some time, and then, by the advice of her man of business, laid it out on landed security. That did very well, and returned very good interest, till Betsey was paid off. I am talking of Betsey as if she was a man-of-war. Well! Then, Betsey had to look about her, for a new investment. She thought she was wiser, now, than her man of business, who was not such a good man of business by this time, as he used to be—I am alluding to your father, Agnes,—and she took it into her head to lay it out for herself. So she took her pigs to a foreign market; and a very bad market it turned out to be. Least said, soonest mended!"

"Dear Miss Trotwood, is that all the history?" said Agnes.

"Is that all?" repeated my aunt. "Why, yes, that's all, 30 except, 'And she lived happy ever afterwards.' Perhaps I may add that of Betsey yet, one of these days. What's to be done? How can Trot and I do best, upon our means? What do you say, Agnes?"

"I have been thinking, Trotwood," said Agnes, diffidently, "that if you had time——"

"I have a good deal of time, Agnes. I am always disengaged after four or five o'clock, and I have time early in the morning. In one way and another," said I, conscious of reddening a little as I thought of the hours and hours I had devoted to fagging about town, and to and fro upon the Norwood Road, "I have abundance of time."

"I know you would not mind," said Agnes, coming to me, and speaking in a low voice, so full of sweet and hopeful consideration that I hear it now, "the duties of a secretary."

10 "Mind, my dear Agnes?"

"Because," continued Agnes, "Dr. Strong has acted on his intention of retiring, and has come to live in London; and he asked papa, I know, if he could recommend him one. Don't you think he would rather have his favourite old pupil near him, than anybody else?"

"Dear Agnes!" said I. "What should I do without you? You are always my good angel. I told you so. I never think of you in any other light."

A knock came at the door.

20 "I think," said Agnes, turning pale, "it's papa. He promised me that he would come."

I opened the door, and admitted, not only Mr. Wickfield, but Uriah Heep. I had not seen Mr. Wickfield for some time. I was prepared for a great change in him, after what I had heard from Agnes, but his appearance shocked me.

"Well, Wickfield!" said my aunt, "I have been telling your daughter how well I have been disposing of my money for myself, because I couldn't trust it to you, as you were growing rusty in business matters. We have been taking 30 counsel together, and getting on very well, all things considered. Agnes is worth the whole firm, in my opinion."

"If I may umbly make the remark," said Uriah Heep, with a writhe, "I fully agree with Miss Betsey Trotwood, and should be only too appy if Miss Agnes was a partner."

Here he shook hands with me: not in the common way, but standing at a good distance from me, and lifting my

hand up and down like a pump handle, that he was a little afraid of.

"And how do you think we are looking, Master Copperfield—I should say, Mister?" fawned Uriah. "Don't you find Mr. Wickfield blooming, sir? Years don't tell much in our firm, Master Copperfield, except in raising up the umble, namely, mother and self—and in developing," he added as an after-thought, "the beautiful, namely Miss Agnes."

He jerked himself about, after this compliment, in such an intolerable manner, that my aunt, who had sat looking straight at him, lost all patience.

"Deuce take the man!" said my aunt sternly, "what's he about? If you're an eel, sir, conduct yourself like one. If you're a man, control your limbs, sir! I am not going to be serpentinced and corkscrewed out of my senses!"

Mr. Heep was rather abashed, as most people might have been, by this explosion; but he said to me aside in a meek voice—

"I only called to say that if there was anything we could do, in present circumstances, mother or self, or Wickfield & Heep, we should be really glad. I may go so far?" said Uriah, with a sickly smile at his partner.

"Uriah Heep," said Mr. Wickfield, in a monotonous, forced way, "is active in the business, Trotwood. What he says, I quite concur in. You know I had an old interest in you. Apart from that, what Uriah says I quite concur in!"

"Oh, what a reward it is," said Uriah, drawing up one leg, at the risk of bringing down upon himself another visitation from my aunt, "to be so trusted in! But I hope I am able to do something to relieve him from the fatigues of business, Master Copperfield!"

"Uriah Heep is a great relief to me," said Mr. Wickfield, in the same dull voice. "It's a load off my mind, Trotwood, to have such a partner."

The red fox made him say all this, I knew, to exhibit him to me in the light he had indicated on the night when he poisoned my rest. I saw the same ill-favoured smile upon his face again, and saw how he watched me.

" You are not going, papa ? " said Agnes anxiously.
" Will you not walk back with Trotwood and me ? "

He would have looked to Uriah, I believe, before replying, if that worthy had not anticipated him.

" I am bespoke myself," said Uriah, " on business ; other-
10 wise I should have been appy to have kept with my friends. But I leave my partner to represent the firm. Miss Agnes, ever yours ! I wish you good-day, Master Copperfield, and leave my umble respects for Miss Betsey Trotwood."

With those words, he retired, kissing his great hand, and leering at us like a mask.

We sat there, talking about our pleasant old Canterbury days, an hour or two. Mr. Wickfield, left to Agnes, soon became more like his former self ; though there was a settled depression upon him, which he never shook off.

20 My aunt would not accompany us to the place where they were staying, but insisted on my going ; and I went. We dined together. After dinner, Agnes sat beside him, as of old, and poured out his wine. He took what she gave him, and no more—like a child—and we all three sat together at the window as the evening gathered in. When it was almost dark, he lay down on a sofa, Agnes pillowing his head and bending over him a little while ; and when she came back to the window, it was not so dark but I could see tears glittering in her eyes.

30 Oh, Agnes, sister of my boyhood, if I had known then what I knew long afterwards !

CHAPTER XVIII

A RETROSPECT

Meanwhile, Miss Murdstone discards one of David's letters sent through Miss Mills to Dora. In anger Mr. Spenlow refuses to permit the engagement of David and his daughter. The same night, however, he dies on his way home to Norwood, and Dora goes to live at Putney with her aunts; where David, having taken Agnes' advice to write and explain matters, is permitted to visit. David gradually comes to see that Dora is hopelessly unpractical and incapable of taking any interest in cooking or household accounts.

LET me pause upon a memorable period of my life. Let me stand aside, to see the phantoms of those days go by me, accompanying the shadow of myself, in dim procession.

Weeks, months, seasons pass along. They seem little more than a summer day and a winter evening. I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the dignity of twenty-one. But this is a sort of dignity that may be thrust upon one. Let me think what I have achieved.

I have tamed that savage stenographic mystery. I make a respectable income by it. I am in high repute for my 10 accomplishment in all pertaining to the art, and am joined with eleven others in reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper.

I have come out in another way. I have taken with fear and trembling to authorship. I wrote a little something, in secret, and sent it to a magazine, and it was published in the magazine. Since then I have taken heart to write a good many trifling pieces. Now, I am regularly paid for them. Altogether, I am well off; when I tell my income on the fingers of my left hand, I pass the third finger and take 20 in the fourth to the middle joint.

I am going to be married to Dora ! Miss Lavinia and Miss Clarissa have given their consent ; and if ever canary birds were in a flutter, they are.

Nevertheless, I am in a dream, a flustered, happy, hurried dream. I can't believe that it is going to be. Nothing is real.

I get up very early in the morning, to ride to the Highgate road and fetch my aunt.

I have never seen my aunt in such state. She is dressed 10 in lavender-coloured silk, and has a white bonnet on, and is amazing. Janet has dressed her, and is there to look at me. Peggotty is ready to go to church, intending to behold the ceremony from the gallery. Mr. Dick, who is to give my darling to me at the altar, has had his hair curled. Traddles, whom I have taken up by appointment at the turnpike, presents a dazzling combination of cream colour and light blue ; and both he and Mr. Dick have a general effect about them of being all gloves.

Then we come to the church door.

20 The church is calm enough, I am sure ; but it might be a steam-power loom in full action, for any sedative effect it has on me. I am too far gone for that.

The rest is all a more or less incoherent dream.

We drive away together, and I awake from the dream. I believe it at last. It is my dear, dear, little wife beside me, whom I love so well !

"Are you happy now, you foolish boy ?" says Dora, "and sure you don't repent ?"

I have stood aside to see the phantoms of those days go 30 by me. They are gone, and I resume the journey of my story.

CHAPTER XIX

I AM INVOLVED IN MYSTERY

David and Traddles meet Mr. Micawber, who for some time past has been Uriah Heep's confidential clerk, by appointment outside the King's Bench Prison

ALTHOUGH we appeared at the stipulated place a quarter of an hour before the time, we found Mr. Micawber already there.

When we accosted him, his manner was something more confused, and something less genial, than of yore. He had relinquished his legal suit of black for the purposes of this excursion, and wore the old surtout and tights, but not quite with the old air. He gradually picked up more and more of it as we conversed with him, but his very eye-glass seemed to hang less easily and his shirt collar, though still of the old formidable dimensions, rather drooped.

10

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Micawber, after the first salutations, "you are friends in need, and friends indeed."

"Oh, you are in low spirits, Mr. Micawber," said Traddles.

"I am, sir," interposed Mr. Micawber.

"How is our friend Heep, Mr. Micawber?" said I, after a silence.

"My dear Copperfield," returned Mr. Micawber, bursting into a state of much excitement, and turning pale, "if you ask after my employer as *your* friend, I am sorry for it; if you ask after him as *my* friend, I sardonically smile at it. 20 In whatever capacity you ask after my employer, I beg, without offence to you, to limit my reply to this—that whatever his state of health may be, his appearance is foxy: not to say diabolical. You will allow me, as a private individual, to decline pursuing a subject which has lashed me to the utmost verge of desperation in my professional capacity."

I expressed my regret for having innocently touched upon a theme that roused him so much.

I then mentioned that it would give me great pleasure to introduce him to my aunt, if he would ride out to Highgate, where a bed was at his service.

"You shall make us a glass of your own punch, Mr. Micawber," said I, "and forget whatever you have on your mind, in pleasanter reminiscences."

"Or, if confiding anything to friends will be more likely to relieve you, you shall impart it to us, Mr. Micawber," said Traddles prudently.

- 10 "Gentlemen," returned Mr. Micawber, "do with me as you will ! I am a straw upon the surface of the deep, and am tossed in all directions by the elephans—I beg your pardon ; I should have said the elements."

We walked on, arm-in-arm ; found the coach in the act of starting ; and arrived at Highgate without encountering any difficulties by the way. I was very uneasy and very uncertain in my mind what to say or do for the best—so was Traddles, evidently. Mr. Micawber was for the most part plunged into deep gloom. He occasionally made an attempt to smarten himself, and hum the fag-end of a tune ; but his relapses into profound melancholy were only made the more impressive by the mockery of a hat exceedingly on one side, and a shirt-collar pulled up to his eyes.

We went to my aunt's house rather than to mine, because of Dora's not being well. My aunt presented herself on being sent for, and welcomed Mr. Micawber with gracious cordiality. Mr. Micawber kissed her hand, retired to the window, and pulling out his pocket-handkerchief, had a mental wrestle with himself.

- 30 I felt that we were all constrained and uneasy, and I watched Mr. Micawber so anxiously in his vacillations between an evident disposition to reveal something, and a counter-disposition to reveal nothing, that I was in a perfect fever.

"You are a very old friend of my nephew's, Mr. Micawber," said my aunt. "I wish I had had the pleasure of seeing you before."

"Madam," returned Mr. Micawber "I wish I had had the honour of knowing you at an earlier period. I was not always the wreck you at present behold."

I saw that a crisis was at hand, and it came. He rose from his chair, pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and burst into tears.

"Mr. Micawber," said I, "what's the matter? Pray speak out. You are among friends."

"Among friends, sir!" repeated Mr. Micawber; and all he had reserved came breaking out of him. "Good heavens, 10 it is principally because I *am* among friends that my state of mind is what it is. What is the matter, gentlemen? What is *not* the matter? Villainy is the matter; baseness is the matter; deception, fraud, conspiracy, are the matter; and the name of the whole atrocious mass is—HEEP!"

My aunt clapped her hands, and we all started up as if we were possessed.

"The struggle is over!" said Mr. Micawber, violently gesticulating with his pocket-handkerchief, and fairly striking out from time to time with both arms, as if he were swimming 20 under superhuman difficulties. "I will lead this life no longer. I am a wretched being, cut off from everything that makes life tolerable. I have been under a Taboo in that infernal scoundrel's service."

I never saw a man so hot in my life. I tried to calm him, that we might come to something rational; but he got hotter and hotter, and wouldn't hear a word.

"I'll put my hand in no man's hand," said Mr. Micawber, gasping, puffing, and sobbing, to that degree that he was like a man fighting with cold water, "until I have—blown 30 to fragments—the—a—detestable—serpent—HEEP! I'll partake of no one's hospitality, until I have—a—moved Mount Vesuvius—to eruption—on—a—the abandoned rascal—HEEP! Refreshment—a—underneath this roof—particularly punch—would—a—choke me—unless—I had—previously—choked the eyes—out of the head—a—of—

interminable cheat, and liar—HEEP ! I—a—I'll know nobody—and—a—say nothing—and—a—live nowhere—until I have crushed—to—a—undiscoverable atoms—the—transcendent and immortal hypocrite and perjurer—HEEP !”

I really had some fear of Mr. Micawber's dying on the spot. I would have gone to his assistance, but he waved me off, and wouldn't hear a word.

“ No, Copperfield !—No communication—a—until—Miss Wickfield—a—redress from wrongs inflicted by consummate 10 scoundrel—HEEP !” (I am quite convinced he could not have uttered three words, but for the amazing energy with which this word inspired him when he felt it coming.) “ Inviolable secret—a—from the whole world—a—no exceptions —this day week—a—at breakfast time—a—everybody present—including aunt—a—and extremely friendly gentleman—to be at Canterbury and—a—will expose intolerable russian—HEEP ! No more to say—a—or listen to persuasion —go immediately—not capable—a—bear society—upon the track of devoted and doomed traitor—HEEP !”

20 With this last repetition of the magic word that had kept him going at all, and in which he surpassed all his previous efforts, Mr. Micawber rushed out of the house ; leaving us in a state of excitement, hope, and wonder, that reduced us to a condition little better than his own. But even then his passion for writing letters was too strong to be resisted ; for while we were yet in the height of our excitement, hope, and wonder, the following pastoral note was brought to me from a neighbouring tavern, at which he had called to write it :—

“ Most secret and confidential.

30 “ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I beg to be allowed to convey, through you, my apologies to your excellent aunt for my late excitement. An explosion of a smouldering volcano long suppressed, was the result of an internal contest more easily conceived than described.

"I trust I rendered tolerably intelligible my appointment for the morning of this day week, at Canterbury.

"The duty done, and act of reparation performed, which can alone enable me to contemplate my fellow mortal, I shall be known no more. I shall simply require to be deposited in that place of universal resort, where,

'Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the manlet sleep.'

"—With the plain Inscription,

"'WILKINS MICAWBER.' " 10

CHAPTER XX

I ASSIST AT AN EXPLOSION

WHEN the time Mr. Micawber had appointed so mysteriously, was within four-and-twenty hours of being come, my aunt and I consulted how we should proceed; and we four, that is to say, my aunt, Mr. Dick, Traddles, and I, went down to Canterbury by the Dover mail that night.

Next morning we all went out together to the old house, without saying one word on the way.

We found Mr. Micawber at his desk, in the turret office on the ground floor, either writing, or pretending to write, hard. The large office-ruler was stuck into his waistcoat, 20 and was not so well concealed but that a foot or more of that instrument protruded from his bosom, like a new kind of shirt-frill.

As it appeared to me that I was expected to speak, I said aloud—

"How do you do, Mr. Micawber?"

"Mr. Copperfield," said Mr. Micawber gravely, "I hope I see you well?"

"Is Miss Wickfield at home?" said I.

"Mr. Wickfield is unwell in bed, sir, of a rheumatic fever," he returned ; "but Miss Wickfield, I have no doubt, will be happy to see old friends. Will you walk in, sir ?"

He preceded us to the dining-room—the first room I had entered in that house—and flinging open the door of Mr. Wickfield's former office, said, in a sonorous voice—

"Miss Trotwood, Mr. David Copperfield, Mr. Thomas Traddles, and Mr. Dixon ! "

I had not seen Uriah Heep since the time of the blow.
10 Our visit astonished him, evidently ; not the less, I daresay, because it astonished ourselves.

"Well, I am sure," he said, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure ! To have, as I may say, all friends round St. Paul's, at once, is a treat unlooked for ! Mr. Copperfield, I hope I see you well, and—if I may umbly express myself so—friendly towards them as is ever your friends, whether or not."

I felt ashamed to let him take my hand, but I did not know yet what else to do.

20 "Things are changed in this office, Miss Trotwood, since I was an umble clerk, and held your pony ; ain't they ?" said Uriah, with his sickliest smile. "But I am not changed, Miss Trotwood."

"Well, sir," returned my aunt, "to tell you the truth, I think you are pretty constant to the promise of your youth ; if that's any satisfaction to you."

30 "Thank you, Miss Trotwood," said Uriah, writhing in his ungainly manner, "for your good opinion ! Micawber, tell 'em to let Miss Agnes know—and Mother. Mother will be quite in a state, when she sees the present company !" said Uriah, setting chairs.

"You are not busy, Mr. Heep ?" said Traddles.

"No, Mr. Traddles," replied Uriah, resuming his official seat, and squeezing his bony hands, laid palm to palm, between his bony knees. "Not but what myself and Micawber have our hands pretty full, in general, on account of Mr.

Wickfield's being hardly fit for any occupation, sir. But it's a pleasure as well as a duty, I am sure, to work for *him*. You've not been intimate with Mr. Wickfield, I think, Mr. Traddles ? I believe I've only had the honour of seeing you once myself ? "

"No, I have not been intimate with Mr. Wicksfield," returned Traddles ; "or I might perhaps have waited on you long ago, Mr. Heep."

There was something in the tone of this reply, which made Uriah look at the speaker again, with a very sinister and suspicious expression.

Agnes now entered, ushered in by Mr. Micawber. She was not quite so self-possessed as usual, I thought ; and had evidently undergone anxiety and fatigue.

"Don't wait, Micawber," said Uriah.

Mr. Micawber, with his hand upon the ruler in his breast, stood erect before the door, most unmistakably contemplating one of his fellow-men, and that man his employer.

"What are you waiting for ?" said Uriah. "Micawber ! Did you hear me tell you not to wait ?"

20

"Yes !" replied the immovable Mr. Micawber.

"Then why *do* you wait ?" said Uriah.

"Because I—in short, choose," replied Mr. Micawber, with a burst.

Uriah's cheeks lost colour, and an unwholesome paleness, still faintly tinged by his pervading red, overspread them. He looked at Mr. Micawber attentively, with his whole face breathing short and quick in every feature.

"You are a dissipated fellow, as all the world knows," he said, with an effort at a smile, "and I am afraid you'll 30 oblige me to get rid of you. Go along ! I'll talk to you presently."

"If there is a scoundrel on this earth," said Mr. Micawber, suddenly breaking out again with the utmost vehemence, "with whom I have already talked too much, that scoundrel's name is—HEEP !"

Uriah fell back, as if he had been struck or stung. Looking slowly round upon us with the darkest and wickedest expression that his face could wear, he said, in a lower voice—

“Oho ! This is a conspiracy ! You have met here, by appointment ! You are playing Booty with my clerk, are you, Copperfield ? Now, take care. You’ll make nothing of this. We understand each other, you and me. There’s no love between us. You were always a puppy with a proud stomach, from your first coming here ; and you envy me my 10 rise, do you ? None of your plots against me ; I’ll counterplot you ! Micawber, you be off. I’ll talk to you presently.”

“Mr. Micawber,” said I, “there is a sudden change in this fellow, in more respects than the extraordinary one of his speaking the truth in one particular, which assures me that he is brought to bay. Deal with him as he deserves ! ”

Micawber reads out a letter in which he denounces Uriah for forging Mr. Wickfield’s signature to a document, thereby making the latter his debtor for a vast sum. To keep Micawber quiet Heep has advanced him sums of money which he well knew could never be repaid. Traddles meanwhile has secured all the books of the firm ; so Heep, brought to bay, is forced to make complete restitution, including five thousand pounds belonging to Miss Trotwood, of which she has come to believe Mr. Wickfield had robbed her. Traddles remains behind to look after Uriah while David and his aunt accompany Micawber to his house.

“Mr. Micawber,” said my aunt, “I wonder you have never turned your thoughts to emigration.”

“Madam,” returned Mr. Micawber, “it was the dream of my youth, and the fallacious aspiration of my riper years.” 20 I am thoroughly persuaded, by the bye, that he had never thought of it in his life.

“Ay ? ” said my aunt, with a glance at me. “Why, what a thing it would be for yourselves and your family, Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, if you were to emigrate now.”

"Capital, madam, capital," urged Mr. Micawber gloomily.

"That is the principal, I may say the only difficulty, my dear Mr. Copperfield," assented his wife.

"Capital?" cried my aunt. "But you are doing us a great service—have done us a great service, I may say, for surely much will come out of the fine—and what could we do for you, that would be half so good as to find the capital?"

"I could not receive it as a gift," said Mr. Micawber, full of fire and animation, "but if a sufficient sum could be advanced, say at five per cent. interest per annum, upon my personal liability, to allow time for something to turn up—"

"Could be? Can be, and shall be, on your own terms," returned my aunt, "if you say the word."

Shall I ever forget how, in a moment, he was the most sanguine of men, looking on to fortune; or how Mrs. Micawber presently discoursed about the habits of the kangaroo! Shall I ever recall that street of Canterbury on a market day, without recalling him, as he walked back with us; expressing, in the hardy roving manner he assumed, the unsettled habits of a temporary sojourner in the land; and looking at the bullocks, as they came by, with the eye of an Australian farmer!

CHAPTER XXI

TEMPEST

Meanwhile Mr. Peggotty, after fruitless search in France, Italy and Switzerland, finds little Em'ly, who has been abandoned by Steerforth, in London. David goes to Yarmouth to give in person a farewell note from her to Ham in reply to a message of forgiveness from him.

"DON'T you think that," I asked the coachman, in the first stage out of London, "a very remarkable sky? I don't remember to have seen one like it."

"Nor I—not equal to it," he replied. "That's wind, sir. There'll be mischief done at sea, I expect, before long."

There had been a wind all day; and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and it blew hard.

But as the night advanced, the clouds closing in and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow harder and harder. It still increased,
10 until our horses could scarcely face the wind.

When the day broke, it blew harder and harder. I had been in Yarmouth when the seamen said it blew great guns; but I had never known the like of this, or anything approaching to it.

As we struggled on, nearer and nearer to the sea, from which this mighty wind was blowing dead on shore, its force became more and more terrific. Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips, and showered salt rain upon us. When at last we got into the town, the people
20 came out to the doors, all aslant, and with streaming hair, making a wonder of the mail that had come through such a night.

I put up at the old inn, and went down to look at the sea. The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse
30 roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to the hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place,

and beat another shape and place away ; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell ; the clouds flew fast and thick ; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.

Not finding Ham among the people whom this memorable wind—for it is still remembered down there, as the greatest ever known to blow upon that coast—had brought together, I made my way to his house. It was shut ; and as no one answered to my knocking I went, by back ways and by-lanes, to the yard where he worked. I learned, 10 there, that he had gone to Lowestoft, to meet some sudden exigency of ship-repairing in which his skill was required ; but that he would be back to-morrow morning, in good time.

I went back to the inn ; and when I had washed and dressed, and tried to sleep, but in vain, it was five o'clock in the afternoon. I had not sat five minutes by the coffee-room fire, when the waiter, coming to stir it, as an excuse for talking, told me that two colliers had gone down, with all hands, a few miles away ; and that some other ships 20 had been seen labouring hard in the Roads, and trying, in great distress, to keep off-shore. Mercy on them, and on all poor sailors, said he, if we had another night like the last !

I was very much depressed in spirits ; very solitary ; and felt an uneasiness in Ham's not being there, disproportionate to the occasion.

In this state, the waiter's dismal intelligence about the ships immediately connected itself, without any effort of my volition, with my uneasiness about Ham. I was persuaded that I had an apprehension of his returning from Lowestoft 30 by sea, and being lost. This grew so strong with me, that I resolved to go back to the yard before I took my dinner, and ask the boat-builder if he thought his attempting to return by sea at all likely ? If he gave me the least reason to think so, I would go over to Lowestoft and prevent it by bringing him with me.

I hastily ordered my dinner ; but I could not eat, I could not sit still, I could not continue steadfast to anything. At length, the steady ticking of the undisturbed clock on the wall, tormented me to that degree that I resolved to go to bed.

There was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber ; but I was tired, and, getting into bed, fell—off a tower and down a precipice—into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere 10 and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length, I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading.

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant, that I could not hear something I much desired to hear, until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock ; the storm raging, in lieu of the batteries ; and someone knocking and calling at my door.

“ What is the matter ? ” I cried.

20 “ A wreck ! Close by ! ”

I sprung out of bed, and asked, what wreck ?

“ A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine. Make haste, sir, if you want to see her ! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment.”

The excited voice went clambering along the staircase ; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly as I could, and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction, to the beach. I ran the same way, outstripping 30 a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.

Then, O great Heaven, I saw it, close in upon us ! One mast was broken short off, six or eight feet from the deck, and lay over the side, entangled in a maze of sail and rigging ; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite inconceivable—beat the side as if it would stave it in. Some

efforts were even then being made, to cut this portion of the wreck away; for, as the ship, which was broadside on, turned towards us in her rolling, plainly despaired her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But, a great cry, which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men, spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

10

The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail, and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, a boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke, there was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep, clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost, the active figure 20 with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board; and as the ship rolled and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck, as she turned on her beam-ends towards the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprung wildly over and turned towards the sea, the bell rang; and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne towards us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone. The agony on shore increased. Men groaned, and clasped their hands; women shrieked, 30 and turned away their faces. Some ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew, not to let those two lost creatures perish before our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way—I don't

know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the lifeboat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing ; and that as no man would be so desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope, and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left to try ; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham come breaking through them to the front.

I ran to him—as well as I knew, to repeat my appeal for help. But, distracted though I was, by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look, out to sea—exactly the same look as I remembered in connection with the morning after Emily's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger. I held him back with both arms ; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking, not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand !

Another cry arose on shore ; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower 20 of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination as that of the calmly desperate man who was already accustomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. “Mas'r Davy,” he said, cheerily grasping me by both hands, “if my time is come, 'tis come. If 'tan't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all ! Mates, make me ready ! I'm a going off !”

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, 30 where the people around me made me stay ; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don't know what I answered, or what they rejoined ; but, I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan that was there, and penetrating into a circle of

figures that hid him from me. Then, I saw him standing alone, in a seaman's frock and trousers : a rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist : another round his body : and several of the best men holding, at a little distance, to the latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore, at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpractised eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still, he clung to it.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence 10 of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope which was made fast round his body, he dashed in after it, and in a moment was buffeting with the water ; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam ; then drawn again to land. They hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face, from where I stood ; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so 20 I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before.

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, borne in towards the shore, borne on towards the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it—when, a high, green, vast hill-side of water moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a 30 mighty bound, and the ship was gone !

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—dead. He was carried to the nearest house ; and, no one preventing me now, I

remained near him, busy, while every means of restoration were tried ; but he had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

As I sat beside the bed, when hope was abandoned and all was done, a fisherman, who had known me when Emily and I were children, and ever since, whispered my name at the door.

"Sir," said he, with tears starting to his weather-beaten face, which, with his trembling lips, was ashy pale, "will
10 you come over yonder ? "

The old remembrance that had been recalled to me, was in his look. I asked him, terror-stricken, leaning on the arm he held out to support me--

"Has a body come ashore ? "

He said, "Yes."

"Do I know it ? " I asked then.

He answered nothing.

But he led me to the shore. And on that part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children--on that part
20 of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind--among the ruins of the home he had wronged--I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.

CHAPTER XXII

A VISITOR

Mr. Peggotty, his niece, Mrs. Gummidge and the Micawber family, leave for Australia. David and his old nurse seeing the party off at Gravesend.

On the death of Dora, his 'child-wife,' David spends three years on the continent. A letter from Agnes spurs him on to greater literary successes, and eventually, on his return to England, he goes to see her : misunderstandings are cleared up

between them, and on their wedding- our Agnes tells him that Dora on her death-bed had expressed a wish that Agnes should be his second wife.

WHAT I have purposed to record is nearly finished ; but there is yet an incident conspicuous in my memory, on which it often rests with delight, and with but which one thread in the web I have spun would have a severed end.

I had advanced in fame and fortune, my domestic joy was perfect, I had been married ten happy years. Agnes and I were sitting by the fire, in our house in London, one night in spring, and three of our children were playing in the room, when I was told that a stranger wished to see me.

He had been asked if he came on business, and had answered 10 No ; he had come for the pleasure of seeing me, and had come a long way. He was an old man, my servant said, and looked like a farmer.

“ Let him come in here ! ” said I.

There soon appeared, pausing in the dark doorway as he entered, a hale, gray-haired old man. Little Agnes, attracted by his looks, had run to bring him in, and I had not yet clearly seen his face, when my wife, starting up, cried out to me, in a pleased and agitated voice, that it was Mr. Peggotty ! 20

It was Mr. Peggotty. An old man now, but in a ruddy, hearty, strong old age.

“ Mas'r Davy,” said he. And the old name in the old tone fell so naturally on my ear ! “ Mas'r Davy, 'tis a joyful hour as I see you, once more, 'long with your own trew wife ! ”

“ A joyful hour indeed, old friend ! ” cried I. “ And now tell us everything relating to your fortunes.”

“ Our fortuns, Mas'r Davy,” he rejoined, “ is soon told. We haven't fared nohows but fared to thrive. We've allus 30 thrived. We've worked as we ought to't, and maybe we lived a leetle hard at first or so, but we have allus thrived.

What with sheep-farming, and what with stock-farming, and what with one thing and what with t'other, we are as well to do, as well could be. Theer's been kiender a blessing fell upon us," said Mr. Peggotty, reverentially inclining his head, "and we've done nowt but prosper. That is, in the long run. If not yesterday, why then to-day. If not to-day, why then to-morrow."

"And Emily ?" said Agnes and I, both together.

"Em'ly," said he, "arter you left her, ma'am, and arter 10 she and me lost sight of Mas'r Davy, that theer shining sundown was that low, at first, that, if she had know'd then what Mas'r Davy kep from us so kind and thowtful, it's my opinion she'd have drooped away."

"When did she first hear of it ?" I asked.

"I kep it from her arter I heerd on't," said Mr. Peggotty, "going on nigh a year. We was living then in a solitary place, but among the beautifullest trees, and with the roses a-covering our Beein' to the roof. Theer come along one day, when I was out a-working on the land, a traveller from 20 our own Norfolk or Suffolk in England (I doen't rightly mind which), and of course we took him in, and giv him to eat and drink, and made him welcome. We all do that, all the colony over. He'd got an old newspaper with him, and some other account in print of the storm. That's how she know'd it. When I come home at night, I found she know'd it."

"Did it change her much ?" we asked. "Is she altered ?"

"I doen't know. I see her ev'ry day, and doen't know ; but, odd-times, I have thowt so. A slight figure," said Mr. Peggotty, looking at the fire, "kiender worn ; soft, sorrowful, 30 blue eyes ; a delicate face ; a pritty head, leaning a little down ; a quiet voice and way—timid a'most. That's Em'ly !"

"Mrs. Gummidge ?" I suggested.

It was a pleasant key to touch, for Mr. Peggotty suddenly burst into a roar of laughter, and rubbed his hands up and down his legs, as he had been accustomed to do when he enjoyed himself in the long-shipwrecked boat.

"Would you believe it?" he said. "Why, someun even made offers fur to marry *her*! If a ship's cook that was turning settler, Mas'r Davy, didn't make offers fur to marry Missis Gummidge, I'm gormed—an' I can't say no fairer than that!"

"And what did Mrs. Gummidge say?" I asked, when I was grave enough.

"If you'll believe me," returned Mr. Peggotty, "Missis Gummidge, 'stead of saying 'thank you, I'm much obleeged to you, I ain't a going fur to char ge my condition at my time of lite,' up'd with a bucket a. was standing by, and laid it over that theer ship's cook's head 'till he sung out for help, and I went in and reskied of him."

Mr. Peggotty burst into a great roar of laughter, and Agnes and I both kept him company.

"But I must say this, for the good creetur," he resumed, wiping his face when we were quite exhausted; "she has been all she said she'd be to us, and more. She's the willingest, the trewest, the honestest-helping woman, Mas'r Davy, as ever draw'd the breath of life. I have never know'd her to be lone and lorn, for a single minute, not even when the colony was all afore us, and we was new to it. And thinking of the old 'un is a thing she never done, I do assure you, since she left England!"

"Now, last, not least, Mr. Micawber," said I. "He has paid off every obligation he incurred here, and therefore we may take it for granted that he is doing well. But what is the latest news of him?"

Mr. Peggotty, with a smile, put his hand in his breast-pocket, and produced a flat-folded, paper parcel, from which he took out, with much care, a little odd-looking newspaper.

"You are to unnerstan', Mas'r Davy," said he, "as we have left the Bush now, being so well to do; and have gone right away round to Port Middlebay Harbour, wheer theer's what we call a town."

"Mr. Micawber was in the Bush near you?" said I.

"Bless you, yes," said Mr. Peggotty, "and turned to with a will. I never wish to meet a better gen'l'man for turning to with a will. I've seen that theer bald head of his a perspiring in the sun, Mas'r Davy, 'till I a'most thowt it would have melted away. And now he's a Magistrate."

"A Magistrate, oh?" said I.

Mr. Peggotty pointed to a certain paragraph in the news-
10 paper, where I read aloud as follows, from the *Port Middlebay Times* :—

"☞ The public dinner to our distinguished fellow-colonist and townsman, WILKINS MICAWBER, ESQUIRE, Port Middlebay District Magistrate, came off yesterday in the large room of the Hotel, which was crowded to suffocation. It is estimated that not fewer than forty-seven persons must have been accommodated with dinner at one time, exclusive of the company in the passage and on the stairs. The beauty, fashion, and exclusiveness of Port Middlebay, flocked to do 20 honour to one so deservedly esteemed, so highly talented, and so widely popular. Dr. Mell (of Colonial Salem-House Grammar School, Port Middlebay) presided, and on his right sat the distinguished guest. After the removal of the cloth, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were severally given and rapturously received. Dr. Mell, in a speech replete with feeling, then proposed 'Our distinguished Guest, the ornament of our town. May he never leave us but to better himself, and may his success among us be such as to render his bettering himself impossible!' The cheering with which 30 the toast was received defies description."

I was looking back to the name of Dr. Mell, pleased to have discovered, in these happier circumstances, Mr. Mell, formerly poor pinched usher, when, Mr. Peggotty pointing to another part of the paper, my eyes rested on my own name, and I read thus :—

“ TO DAVID COPPERFIELD, ESQUIRE,

“ THE EMINENT AUTHOR.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Years have elapsed, sir, &e I had an opportunity of ocularly perusing the lineaments, now familiar to the imaginations of a considerable portion of the civilised world.

“ But, my dear sir, though estranged ‘by the force of circumstances over which I have had no control) from the personal society of the friend and companion of my youth, I have not been unmindful of his soaring flight. Nor have I 10 been debarred,

‘Though seas between us brid ha’ roared,’

(BURNS) from participating in the intellectual feasts he has spread before us.

“ I cannot, therefore, allow of the departure from this place of an individual whom we mutually respect and esteem, without, my dear sir, taking this public opportunity of thanking you, on my own behalf, and, 1 may undertake to add, on that of the whole of the Inhabitants of Port Middlebay, for the gratification of which you are the ministering agent. 20

“ Go on, my dear sir ! You are not unknown here, you are not unappreciated. Though ‘remote,’ we are neither ‘unfriended,’ ‘melancholy,’ nor (I may add) ‘slow.’ Go on, my dear sir, in your Eagle course ! The Inhabitants of Port Middlebay may at last aspire to watch it. with delight, with entertainment, with instruction !

“ Among the eyes elevated towards you from this portion of the globe, will ever be found, while it has light and life,

“ The

“ Eye

30

“ Appertaining to

“ WILKINS MICAWBER,

“ Magistrate.”

Mr. Peggotty lived with us during the whole term of his stay—which, I think, was something less than a month—

and his sister and my aunt came to London to see him. Agnes and I parted from him aboard-ship, when he sailed ; and we shall never part from him more, on earth.

But before he left, he went with me to Yarmouth, to see a little tablet I had put up in the churchyard to the memory of Ham. While I was copying the plain inscription for him at his request, I saw him stoop, and gather a tuft of grass from the grave, and a little earth.

“ For Em’ly,” he said, as he put it in his breast. “ I
10 promised, Mas’r Davy.”

CHAPTER XXIII

A LAST RETROSPECT

AND now my written story ends. I look back, once more—for the last time—before I close these leaves.

I see myself, with Agnes at my side, journeying along the road of life. I see our children and our friends around us ; and I hear the roar of many voices, not indifferent to me as I travel on.

What faces are the most distinct to me in the fleeting crowd ? Lo, these ; all turning to me as I ask my thoughts the question !

20 Here is my aunt, in stronger spectacles, an old woman of fourscore years and more, but upright yet, and a steady walker of six miles at a stretch in winter weather.

Always with her, here comes Peggotty, my good old nurse, likewise in spectacles.

My aunt’s old disappointment is set right, now. She is godmother to a real living Betsey Trotwood ; and Dora (the next in order) says she spoils her.

Working at his chambers in the Temple, with a busy aspect, and his hair (where he is not bald) made more re-
30 bellious than ever by the constant friction of his lawyer’s

wig, I come, in a later time, upon my dear old Traddles. His table is covered with thick piles of papers.

And now, as I close my task, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away. But, one face, shining on me like a Heavenly light by which I see all other objects, is above them and beyond them all. And that remains.

I turn my head, and see it, in its beautiful serenity, beside me. My lamp burns low, and I have written far into the night ; but the dear presence, without which I were nothing, bears me company.

O Agnes, O my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed ; so may I, when realities are melting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward !

10

NOTES

CHAPTER III.

rope-walks: long narrow sheds in which strands of hemp are woven into ropes.

caulkers' yards: shipyards where wooden vessels are caulked, i.e. are rendered watertight by having their seams filled with oakum and pitch.

Aladdin's palace: built in a night for Aladdin by the genie of the lamp. See *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.

roc's egg: the one ornament required, according to the false Fatima, in the story of Aladdin, to make the palace the wonder of the universe. The roc was a fabulous bird of prodigious size, inhabiting the summit of Mount Caucasus. For an account of it see *The Second Voyage of Sinbad*.

lugger: a small two- or three-masted vessel with *tug* sails, i.e. four-cornered sails bent on a yard suspended obliquely from the mast.

gormed: an East Anglian oath, the etymology of which is unknown, as it was to those who used it, "but they all regarded it as constituting a most solemn imprecation."

militia of words: the force or body of words which she had enrolled as her own, and drilled for her own use.

CHAPTER IV.

stage-cutch. Before the advent of railways, coaches conveyed passengers from stage to stage, i.e. as a rule, the inns at which the horses were changed. We still have 'fare-stages' on our tram routes.

choker: a neckerchief.

cow-pock: small-pox.

send me to Coventry: exclude me from their society, refuse to associate with me. "According to Messrs. Chambers (*Cyclopaedia*), the citizens of Coventry had so great a dislike to soldiers that a woman seen speaking to one was instantly tabooed. No intercourse was ever allowed between the garrison and the town; hence, when a soldier was sent to Coventry, he was cut off from all social intercourse."

"Hutton, in his *History of Birmingham*, gives a different version. He says that Coventry was a stronghold of the Parliamentary party in the civil wars, and that all troublesome and refractory royalists were sent there for safe custody." (Dr. Brewer.)

CHAPTER V

father-in-law: stepfather. So in *Richard III.* (Act v. sc. 3, l. 81), Richmond addresses the Earl of Derby his stepfather:

All comfort.
Be to thy person, noble father in-law.

a Tartar: properly, a native of Tartary; hence an intractable savage, an irritable person.

exordium: introductory part of a speech.

Peregrine Pickle: a picaresque novel by Tobias Smollett, published in 1751.

CHAPTER VII.

counting-house: the portion of their premises where merchants keep their accounts and transact business with their customers.

hind: the term is now practically confined to farm labourers in charge of a pair of horses.

Blackfriars: the part of the City of London lying between Ludgate Hill and the river, where formerly there was a convent of the Black Friars of the Dominican Order.

packet ships: vessels plying regularly between one port and another, and carrying goods, passengers and mails.

surtout: a close fitting frock coat

quizzing glass: monocle.

arcana: secrets, mysteries.

Modern Babylon: London in the modern world is what Babylon was in the ancient world—the centre of wealth, luxury and vice.

King's Bench Prison for debtors, the Marshalsea prison in Southwark (on the opposite side of the river to Blackfriars), to which Dickens' father had been committed for debt.

casino: a card game.

CHAPTER VIII.

the Obelisk: in the grounds of Bethlehem hospital, at S. end of Lambeth Suspension Bridge. It was erected in 1771 in honour of Lord Mayor Crosby, who obtained the release of a printer imprisoned for publishing the parliamentary debates. In 1907 the Obelisk was superseded by the clock tower in St. George's Circus, at the junction of Blackfriars Road and Waterloo Road.

CHAPTER IX.

slop-shops: 'slops' are loose fitting garments that 'slip' on easily. Hence, a slop-shop is one where such articles, cheap and ready-made, are sold.

Mr. Dick: an eccentric distant connection of Miss Trotwood, whom she saved from a lunatic asylum by taking him into her house. He spent his time in preparing a memorial to the Lord Chancellor about his affairs, but, though he had been ten years at work on it, he had failed to complete it, for he could not keep King Charles the First out of it. This amenable and friendly creature spent what time he could spare from his memorial in flying great kites.

CHAPTER XII.

knee-smalls: breeches reaching just below the knee.

articles: a legal document binding Uriah as an apprentice to Mr. Wickfield, who, in this case, did not demand payment of the customary 'premium.'

CHAPTER XIII.

proctor: an ecclesiastical lawyer.

the Commons: 'Doctors' Commons' was originally a society of ecclesiastical lawyers who had their courts near St. Paul's Cathedral. There were five distinct courts, differing in effect but little from each other. The society was dissolved in the middle of last century, and its functions were taken over by the Probate and Divorce Court.

CHAPTER XIV.

sundry collateral matters: *i.e.* expenses, such as rates, arising out of his house-rent.

Norwood: a suburb of S.E. London in Surrey.

phaeton: an open carriage drawn by one or two horses.

a salvage case: a claim for compensation from the owners of a ship or cargo made for services rendered by persons other than the crew of the vessel. Such cases are now brought before the Admiralty Court, which, in Dickens' days, formed part of the Doctors' Commons.

Camden Town: a suburb in N.W. London; a squalid neighbourhood in Dickens' days.

to keep my terms: a law-student at the Inns of Court keeps his terms by dining in Hall a certain number of times. Hence the expression "to eat one's terms," *i.e.* to study for the Bar.

The hundred pounds was paid by Traddles to be allowed to 'read' in the chambers of a barrister

in statu quo: in my former condition.

avocation: properly, that which calls a man away from his business, a distraction, a hobby; but here the word has its usual present-day meaning, and is equivalent to 'vocation.'

CHAPTER XV.

He's a-going out with the tide: it was, and still is (especially among sea-coast people), a common belief that a person on the point of death will live till the tide turns. See Mistress Quickly's account of the death of Falstaff (*Hen. V. II. 3*): "a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide."

CHAPTER XVII.

funded her property: we should say 'invested in Government stock.'

laid it out on landed security: let her money out on mortgage, on the security of land. She was 'paid off' when the borrower repaid the loan.

the red fox: Uriah had red hair. Earlier in the novel Dickens refers to him as "this detestable Rufus."

CHAPTER XVIII.

that savage stenographic mystery: shorthand, the difficulties of which, to the self-taught, Dickens thus relates:—"The changes that were rung upon dots, which in such a position meant such a thing, and in such another position something else entirely different; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles; the unaccountable consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs; the tremendous effects of a curve in a wrong place; not only troubled my waking hours, but reappeared before me in my sleep. When I had groped my way, blindly, through these difficulties, and had mastered the alphabet, there then appeared a procession of new horrors, called arbitrary characters (*i.e.* grammalogues); the most despotic characters I have ever known; who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb meant 'expectation,' and that a pen-and-ink sky-rocket stood for 'disadvantageous.' In short, it was almost heart-breaking."

my income: *i.e.* £350.

CHAPTER XIX.

under a Taboo: accursed. Among the Polynesians taboo is a sort of religious institution by which certain things are sacred and therefore prohibited. Hence the idea of 'unholy.'

transcendent: beyond the grasp of human experience.

'Each in his narrow cell ... sleep': from Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

CHAPTER XX.

playing Booty with my clerk: conspiring with him to cheat me, to share the 'booty' or plunder.

CHAPTER XXI.

the Roads: the Yarmouth Roadstead, where ships ride at anchor in safety.

CHAPTER XXII.

what Mas'r Davy kep from us: the news of Steerforth's death.

the Bush: the wild uncultivated districts of Australia.

Though seas ... roared :

“ But seas between us b aid hac roar’d,
Sin auld lang syne.

‘Auld Lang Syne’ has been called the ‘national anthem of good-fellowship.’

remote, etc. :

“ Remote, unfriended, m^o lancholy, slow,”
the first line in Oliver Goldsmith’s *T avel’er*.

EXERCISES

1. Describe David's life while he was working at Murdstone & Grinby's warehouse.
2. What adventures did David meet with on his way to Dover?
3. Give a short account of David's childhood up to the time of his mother's second marriage
4. Under what circumstances was David sent to a boarding-school?
5. Describe the appearance, outside and inside, of Mr. Peggotty's boat at Yarmouth.
6. Contrast the schools of Mr. Creakle and Dr. Strong. In what other novels of Dickens do we find descriptions of schools?
7. How did Miss Trotwood come to lose her money? What did Agnes think about this loss?
8. Who was Traddles? Give some account of the part played by him in the story.
9. Sketch the character of Mr. Micawber. Compare him with any character in any other story that you have read.
10. Show how Mr. Micawber exposed the schemes of Uriah Heep.
11. What do you know of Mrs. Gummidge and of Miss Mills?
12. Give an account of Mr. Dick.
13. Show how the death of Steerforth was connected with that of Ham.
14. Summarise the news brought from Australia by Mr. Peggotty.
15. Contrast the characters of Dora and Agnes.

16. Which is your favourite character in this novel? Give your reasons.

17. Construct sentences in which the following words are used in such a way as to show their meaning clearly: tumultuous, exigency, cogitation, horizon, volition, apprehension, valiant, peruse, mutual, indifferent, serenity, rational, admonition, divert, gesture, broadside, capstan.

18. Give the meaning of these words and connect it in each case with the derivation : sardonic, incessant, undulating, fascination, auspicious, cordial, peregrination.

19. Recount your experiences and feelings on your first day at your present school.

20. How would you like to be the nephew (or niece) of a Miss Betsey Trotwood?

21. Had you been in David's place at Murdstone & Grinby's would you have run away to Dover?

22. Try to write a letter such as Mr. Micawber might have written to David a month after his arrival in Australia.

23. Describe in Dickens' manner the home of your own childhood.

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. "Mr. Dick's presence in *David Copperfield* might seem waste of space." For what purpose do you think Dickens introduced him?
2. Humour and pathos: what are they? Illustrate from this novel.
3. Dickens' powers of characterisation.
4. Name one character of Dickens whom you unreservedly like, and one whom you dislike. Give your reasons in both cases.
5. A contrast between (a) Dickens and Thackeray, or (b) Dickens and Scott.
6. Are Dickens' most prominent characters caricatures?
7. Compare and contrast Mr. Peggotty in *David Copperfield* with Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations*.
8. How far may *David Copperfield* be regarded as an autobiography?
9. Realism in Dickens.
10. Most people like to see scoundrels get their deserts. Give examples from Dickens of such "poetic justice."
11. The novel as an instrument of reform.
12. "Dickens is a great writer, even if he is not a good writer."
13. The optimism of Dickens.
14. "Dickens never describes a gentleman." Is this true?
15. "Dickens failed to create other than grotesque female character." "Female character—the very thing in which Dickens (and Shakespeare) most excel." Can these conflicting opinions be reconciled or accounted for?
16. Dickens as "a Cockney Shakespeare."

17. What novelists, besides Dickens, have been eminently successful in their treatment of childhood?

18. Choose any scene that is suitable for the purpose (e.g. the scene at the Yarmouth inn, Chapter LV.), and dramatise it.

19. "Scenery, for its own sake, Dickens rarely cared to describe; but no one better understood how to reproduce the combined effect of scenery and weather."

Comment on this. Can you find any examples or a similar use of scenery and weather in Tennyson's *Fairy Tales of the King*?

20. Dickens' literary style.

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(d) See also *The Bookman*, Dickens Number, 1914.

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